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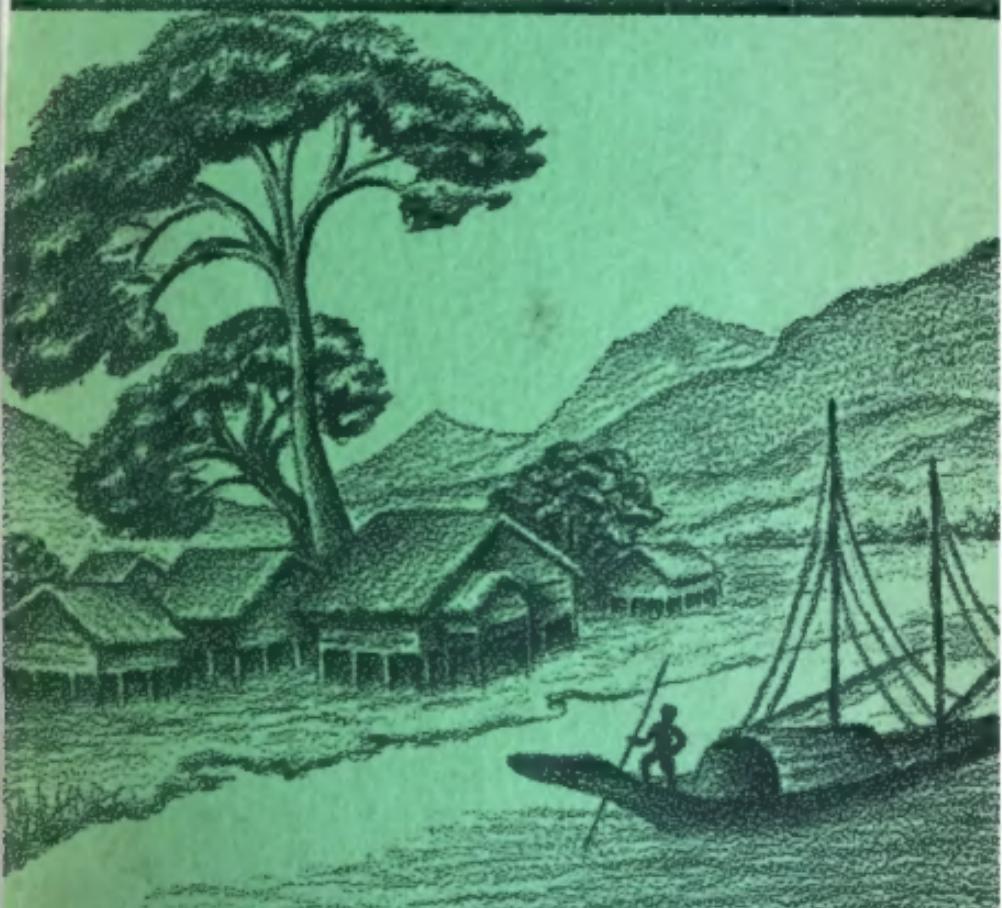








# BOARDMAN OF BURMA



BY J. C. ROBBINS AS



# **BOARDMAN OF BURMA**







**GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN**  
*At the age of about twenty-three*

40-6602

# Boardman of Burma

*A Biography*

*By*

**JOSEPH CHANDLER ROBBINS**

*Philadelphia*

**THE JUDSON PRESS**

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To

**EFFIE STARKEY ROBBINS**

**Beloved companion of all my missionary labors  
since we first went to the Philippines Islands in 1902**

10 Sept 49 Morning 1902



## FOREWORD

In the annals of the missionary pioneers there are gaps, some of which will never be filled so far as earthly records are concerned. In rescuing the intense but slowly fading story of George Dana Boardman's four years in Burma, Dr. Robbins has rendered a service of permanent value.

No one could have been better fitted for the task. The picture of Boardman's background is presented with the bold, simple strokes of a writer who draws from memory ineffaceable details of his own youth. Both Boardman and Robbins went out from rugged New England hills and schools to world Christian service. Through an intimate acquaintance with the land where Boardman helped to lay the foundation of what has been called the greatest mission in the world, Dr. Robbins has been able to reconstruct for us the few poignant years of Boardman's missionary experience.

The writer of this foreword has good reason to know that the tenderness with which Boardman's sufferings and sorrows are treated was

made possible by the fact that on another Asiatic mission field, not far removed from Burma and similar in climate and conditions, Dr. Robbins himself lived and worked as a pioneer, and knew the heavy hand of tropical illness—as well as the pain of standing by a little grave which marks on that tropical field his own Gethsemane.

Boardman's world Christian service filled four years, Robbins' has compassed well-nigh forty, but the same spirit of conviction, concern, and contagious enthusiasm has animated both. They will find themselves kindred spirits when they meet.

P. H. J. LERRIGO.

*The author's lifelong friend and colleague.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many of my friends, by their encouragement and suggestions, have helped in the writing of this little book. I am especially grateful to Dr. William A. Hill, of the Baptist Board of Education; Karen Missionaries, Walter D. Sutton, of Tavoy, and Harry I. Marshall, of Toungoo, Burma; Joseph Smith, of Colby College, Waterville, Maine; Miss Louise Colby, of Skowhegan, Maine; Miss Evangeline Markwick, of Colby Junior College, New London, New Hampshire; my colleagues of the Foreign Mission Society, Secretaries Lerrigo, Howard, Albaugh and Wilson; Mrs. Dorothy Snyder, who drew the map of Burma; Miss Harriet Ogden, who designed the jacket; and my secretary, Miss Beatrice A. Campbell, who has typed the manuscript several times, done much of the research work and made helpful suggestions as to the arrangement of material and the style of the book.

J. C. R.

HYMN SUNG AT THE BOARDMAN MEMORIAL  
SERVICE, COLBY COLLEGE, JUNE 18, 1922.

At Burma's door see Boardman stand,  
A young unbidden guest,  
God's book of promise in his hand,  
True hope of East or West.  
He comes, to hearts that thirst and wait  
Water of life to bring,  
And in the jungle to make straight  
A highway for the King.

"Open the doors," our grandsires cried,  
In tears upon their knees,  
"Behind which hermit peoples hide  
Their ancient miseries!"  
Today wide swing those barrier gates,  
Doors of the world wide swing;  
Wakened from dreams, the Orient waits  
The footsteps of the King.

O Thou, to whom a century's span  
Is as a passing hour,  
Touch hand and heart and lips of man  
With a live coal of power!  
And grant, God, who our fathers heard,  
Thy continents may bring  
Worship of heart and life and word  
To crown the Lord Christ King!

—LOUISE HELEN COBURN.

## INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the Karen people of Burma from a despised, down-trodden, backward race to a people with a prominent and honorable position in the life of Burma is recognized as one of the outstanding achievements of the foreign missionary movement. As a Christian reads the story of their advancement, he cannot but exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

The human instrument used of God to initiate this transformation was George Dana Boardman. He lived but thirty years, and spent only four of these years in Burma; yet his ability, character, and attainments, and, above all, the intensity and devotion of his life, were such as to leave an enduring influence. His life continues to be an inspiration to all those who love and serve their fellow men and work for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

George Dana Boardman made his impress not only in Burma but also in America, for influences from his service for the Kingdom invigorated and deepened the spiritual life in this country. His son, George Dana Boardman, Jr., served for thirty years as the honored minister of the

## *Introduction*

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First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, and by his advocacy of peace and world unity was one of the outstanding leaders in the "sound, progressive, intellectual, religious, and moral thought of the world." At Colby College, known in Boardman's time as Waterville College, the Boardman name is a priceless heritage as the Boardman Missionary Society carries on the tradition established by this first graduate. His life has indeed been an inspiration to hundreds of Colby students who have given themselves to the Christian ministry at home and abroad. The beautiful avenue of trees, known as the Boardman Willows, reminds each succeeding generation of Colby students of their honored alumnus, this great apostle to the Karens. "Theodore Parker once said that the missionary enterprise had paid for itself if it had produced only the character of Adoniram Judson. So the cost of Waterville College for one hundred years was justified by its first graduate."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whittamore, *History of Colby College*, p. 36.

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Map of Burma, *page 65*



1

BOYHOOD DAYS IN MAINE

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## BOYHOOD DAYS IN MAINE

It was in Maine that George Dana Boardman was born, in Livermore, Androscoggin County, on February 8, 1801. And it was in Maine that he spent his boyhood and grew to young manhood. There was little to distinguish George Boardman in those days from the boys with whom he played and went to school. He was brighter than the average—every one conceded that; but he was an everyday boy, too.

What made out of this everyday boy an outstanding pioneer missionary, George Dana Boardman, apostle to the Karens?

To begin with, he had a good heritage. His mother, Phoebe Dana, who married Sylvanus Boardman, April 12, 1790, came from a family of solid worth. She is described as a woman of rare attractiveness and of superior mental and moral qualities. His paternal grandfather, a graduate of Harvard College, had been the parish minister at Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard.

The father, Sylvanus Boardman, was a man to whom the community looked for leadership.

A striking personality was Sylvanus Boardman; nearly six feet tall, spare, somewhat stern, a man of exceptional intellectual ability and sterling character. He had prepared for Harvard, but the outbreak of the Revolutionary War made college attendance impossible, and he continued his studies privately. He later taught school for ten years. He served as a selectman of Livermore, and in 1802, the year after George's birth, was one of the representatives of the District of Maine to the General Court of Massachusetts. He had his own ideas, did Sylvanus Boardman, and persisted in them. He was an outspoken opponent of slavery and of the liquor traffic—hardly a popular stand in those days—and an untiring advocate of world peace. Sylvanus Boardman was, in short, in advance of his time. And he had convictions about religion. Not long after he went to Livermore a little group of Baptists there tried to organize a Baptist church. Sylvanus put all the weight of his opposition against them, and himself headed a group that endeavored to form a Unitarian Congregational church and build a meeting-house of that persuasion. Yet for all his strong-mindedness, Sylvanus was not stubborn; and could change his position upon occasion, for in 1793, during a

revival of religion in Livermore, he had a rather remarkable religious experience, and became a Baptist. He and the other Baptists in the community then formed a little Baptist church. For several years the congregation worshiped without a pastor. In 1802, Sylvanus Boardman was ordained as the first pastor of this church, and so became the minister of the very church whose formation he had formerly opposed! Small wonder that with parents such as these George Dana Boardman was to become a man of convictions and perseverance.

Then, too, George lived in a day of pioneers. The rocky little farm on which he was born had literally been hewn out of the wilderness, when in 1787 his father had come from Martha's Vineyard to establish himself in Livermore. Maine itself was still a "District" of Massachusetts, for it was not until nineteen years after George's birth that it became a State. And the United States was still young in the family of nations: George was born less than twenty-five years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The "Western Frontier" was far to the east of the Mississippi. Great herds of buffalo still roamed the western plains. New England's tall forests were in their prime, and

one did not need to travel very many miles to come upon an Indian settlement.

George's boyhood was spent on the banks of two mighty rivers, the Androscoggin and the Kennebec. The Kennebec, with its many tributary streams and lakes, rising in Moosehead, Maine's largest lake, flowed south for a hundred and fifty miles through virgin forests and the pioneer farms. It teemed with all kinds of fish and in winter yielded a great harvest of ice. Around the river had grown up legends of French and Indian trappers and fighters, of daring settlers, of Arnold's ill-starred expedition to Canada, with its almost unimaginable hardships. The forests along the Kennebec and the Androscoggin furnished the tall masts for the clipper ships that were Maine's pride. Ship-building was an important industry in Maine in those days, and her clippers were to be found in every port of the Seven Seas. Her sons manned the vessels, and brought back to the home farms spices from Java, shawls from India, and silk from China. Every town had its "old salts" who would whittle out a boat for an eager youngster, and fill his ears with tales of typhoons in the South Seas. Maine boys might live in a remote district, but their eyes were on the far horizons, and they

“dreamed dreams.” Another Maine boy of that day, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, has voiced some of these boyish imaginings:

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart  
    Across the schoolboy's brain;  
The song and the silence in the heart,  
That in part are prophecies, and in part  
    Are longings wild and vain.  
    And the voice of that fitful song  
    Sings on, and is never still:  
    “A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.”

Even when he was a little boy George Boardman loved to read, and would hurry through his farm chores to get to his beloved books. In 1810, his parents moved to North Yarmouth, where his father served as pastor of the Baptist church. Here George had the advantage of a better school. His teachers soon discovered that he was an exceptional student. He had a very quick mind and a retentive memory, and made rapid progress. When he was thirteen, he began the study of Latin. The assigned book was completed in an incredibly short time. George thought that he would immediately be allowed to study the lexicon; but no, he was told that he must go through the grammar at least once

or twice more. He was much disappointed but returned to the study of the grammar. After an hour or so, the teacher asked:

"Well, George, how are you getting along?"

"I have finished the book," he replied, and proceeded to recite, verbatim, sixteen pages.

"Do you know any more?" asked the astonished teacher.

"Yes, sir," said George.

"How much?"

"I can repeat the whole book, sir, if you wish," replied George—and did so.

Years later, when George was wrestling with the intricacies of the Burmese language, Latin must have seemed very simple indeed; but the hard drill of those early days stood him in good stead, and doubtless helped him master the more difficult tongue.

In 1816, the family moved to New Sharon. George attended the Farmington Academy, and soon became known as its outstanding student. His preparatory school work was completed at Bloomfield Academy, in what is now Skowhegan, Maine. The headmaster of Bloomfield Academy, Preceptor Hall, was an unusual character, with a high reputation as an educator. He was a Scotsman, a graduate of Edinburgh University,

an exceptional scholar, especially in mathematics. He was just the type of man to bring out the best in an alert student, and under his teaching even mathematics, which George had formerly found difficult, became a fascinating study. Preceptor Hall recognized the boy's ability, and on one occasion, when he had to be away for a week, he left George, then only sixteen, in full charge of the Academy.

At the age of twelve, George had made up his mind that he would go to college. He did not see where the money was to come from, for his father had only a minister's salary, and there were other children to be provided for. He decided that he might be able to earn the money himself. This, indeed, he did, by teaching district school.<sup>1</sup> He was only sixteen when he first began to teach and he had some turbulent and difficult students; yet his success, both as a teacher and as a disciplinarian, was most unusual. People said that he "could look his students into silence." He himself used to admit, laughingly, that if a student withstood his looks he usually considered him a hopeless character. He seemed to

<sup>1</sup> He taught both while preparing for college and also during his college course. Though he entered college in 1819, he withdrew, from December 15, 1820, to March 17, 1821, to teach a school of some eighty pupils at Vassalboro.

have a quiet air of authority, while his scholarship, personality, and presence commanded the respect and obedience of his pupils.

In the spring of 1819, George's ambition was realized, he enrolled as a student in Colby College, then known as the Maine Literary and Theological Institute.

The story of the founding of the New England colleges is one of real romance, heroic endeavor and high faith in God. The purpose of these colleges is graven on Harvard's seal, *Christo et ecclesiae*, "For Christ and the church." Their founders looked to them to provide the church with an educated ministry and the state with leaders of disciplined character. By 1810 the Baptists had become the largest religious body in Maine. Their ministers were for the most part self-taught; but they were wise enough and honest enough to appreciate the great importance of having an educated leadership for Baptist churches. In 1807 the Rev. Sylvanus Boardman, in his circular letter to the Bowdoinham Association, urged that steps be taken to meet this need. This led to the appointment of committees, and a petition to the Legislature. On February 27, 1813, a charter was granted for the "Maine Literary and Theological Institute," and Syl-

vanus Boardman was appointed one of the trustees and the secretary of the new institution. In June of 1820 it was authorized to grant college degrees; and on February 5, 1821, the Legislature changed the name of the institution to Waterville College. On January 23, 1867, in honor of a notable benefactor, the name was again changed to Colby University. Finally, in 1899, it was made Colby College.

As Brown University, the first college established by Baptists in America, gave to Burma the first American Baptist foreign missionary, Adoniram Judson, so Colby College, the first Baptist college established in Maine, was to give Dr. Judson a distinguished missionary associate, George Dana Boardman. The training and mental discipline that Boardman received while he was in college at Waterville, and the friendships with teachers and fellow students there, were to give him that grasp of fundamental principles and that wide vision so marked in later years when he established the mission station at Moulmein and then pioneered among the Karens of Tavoy.



2

**COLBY COLLEGE AND LIFE  
DECISIONS**



## COLBY COLLEGE AND LIFE DECISIONS

George Dana Boardman entered college with a keen mind and a burning intellectual ambition. Farm work had been drudgery to him, but life on the pioneer farm of those days had developed in him an ability to do things, and a resourcefulness and inner discipline. And he had that understanding of life that so often is found in young men whose boyhood has been spent in the fields and woods.

He was a bit taller than his father—six feet, one and a half inches—inclined to be thin, and of a light complexion. He had a certain dignity, but he liked a good story, and knew how to tell one. People took to him, and accepted his leadership.

George greatly admired the head of the college, Dr. Jeremiah Chaplin, and considered himself fortunate in being able to study under him. And Dr. Chaplin in turn was greatly drawn to the eager young student. He found George sensitive, ambitious, enthusiastic, and persistent. He

found, too, that George, like his father, had a mind of his own—"a kind of haughty independence, which made him unwilling to be indebted to others for his views on any subject whatever."

His previous studies gave him advanced standing; and he entered whole-heartedly into every phase of college life. The curriculum, while limited in comparison with curricula today, gave the students a wide classical background, and the work done was thorough and solid. Greek, Latin and mathematics were gone into exhaustively. English composition was required in all four years. There was an emphasis on philosophy, some work in history, and a few courses in such sciences as astronomy and chemistry. Considerable attention was also given to public speaking. George thoroughly enjoyed his studies, while his reading went far beyond the requirements of any of the courses.

The distinctive and engrossing college sports of today were of course unknown; but those early Colby students went on many a hike, and often went swimming in the Kennebec. Here one day George, who was not a good swimmer, narrowly escaped drowning. A fellow-student named Holtom rescued him, and the incident

served to establish a lasting friendship between the two young men.

Boardman was the only one of the twenty students of the college who was not a professed Christian. It was not for want of thinking about his personal relationship to God; he had come from a deeply religious home, and was himself of a mystic temperament; but he writes: "Christ seemed to me a Saviour for those who trusted in him, but not for me." His teachers and a number of the students—in particular his roommate, for whom he had a deep affection—showed a genuine interest in his coming into a frank and open decision for Christ. They talked with him about it; many of them made it a matter of prayer, and he knew that their interest in him was most sincere.

To one of Boardman's nature—an earnest and ardent seeker for truth—such a concern on the part of his friends could not but lead him to seek for himself the depth of experience and assurance that they had found. Finally, he says, "it came to me that what I needed to do was to receive what God was so ready to give." Accordingly, on July 16, 1820, George Boardman made a public profession of religion and united with the Baptist Church at Waterville.

His baptism and first communion meant a great deal to him. He wrote his sister:

"I cannot express to you the joy I felt on that occasion. It seemed to me that I could never again forsake my Saviour. The love of Christ appeared truly incomprehensible. I wanted to tell the world what a dear Saviour I had found."

Such a happy and deep religious experience had to find some practical outward expression. It was not long before George was in charge of a Sunday school, taking an active part in prayer meetings, and giving himself to visiting the sick and those in trouble and want.

In October the students formed the Philanthopian Society (later succeeded by the Boardman Missionary Society), to secure religious information and discuss practical topics in Christian living. George was one of the three who prepared its constitution, and he took an active part in its meetings and work. In October of 1821 he was chosen "Junior Ruling Elder" of the Waterville Baptist Church, and soon, concerned over the spiritual needs of the "back towns," he secured from the church authorization to hold prayer and conference meetings in such of these towns as he might be able to visit during the winter.

This new experience brought into sharp focus the question of his choice of a life work. He had earlier thought of studying medicine; he had already had successful experience as a teacher; now the possibility of entering the ministry became a question that he felt he must face and settle. On October 13, 1821, he writes to his father:

"I cannot say that I am fully established as to the course which it may be my duty, in future, to pursue. That it is my duty to be engaged somewhere in the promotion of the Redeemer's cause, I have but little doubt. But how, and where, are questions with me—questions which I would submit to Him, who knoweth all things."

Shortly after he had come into this deep religious experience, Boardman began to keep a private journal, a custom he continued until the day of his death. Here he recorded not only many interesting events but also the development of his own inner life. Writing in this journal, the early part of his last year in college, he says:

"I shall soon be twenty-one years of age. A wide world lies before me; a world of various pursuits and employments. . . . It becomes me seriously to inquire what God would have me to do. I have some fondness for science and literature; a greater fondness for theology. My

constitution is pretty good. . . . my talents for speaking small, but my mind is swallowed up in the cause of Christ. My inclinations to engage in the gospel ministry are very strong; my sense of my insufficiency, very deep; my impressions of duty, increasing; the calls for laborers in the Lord's vineyard, very loud and frequent. . . . O my God, what shall I do? where shall I go? I am willing, so far as I know myself, to devote my all to the service of my God. O Lord, direct me! Send me where thou wilt. I am thine. Only let me glorify thee in all things, whether by life or by death."

It was not long before he came to the settled conviction that he should enter the Christian ministry. Implicit in this decision was the question, Where should he serve? For to him a decision to enter the ministry carried with it the absolute necessity of considering the whole world field. This question was not to be settled immediately, but it was constantly in his mind.

Commencement Day came—June, 1822—and it was a great occasion, for it was the first Commencement of the young college. The Governor of the State was present, there was an academic procession—marshal, trustees, president, professors and students. The Rev. Jeremiah Chaplin, professor of divinity in the Theological Institution, who had been administrative head of the college, was inaugurated as

president of the college and delivered an inaugural address. From among the students there were four speakers, two from the theological school, and two from the college—George Dana Boardman, valedictorian, and Ephraim Tripp, salutatorian. Boardman's address was entitled, "The virtue and reputation of a nation dependent on the encouragement it affords to solid learning."

Boardman had been a brilliant student, and his teaching ability was well known. The morning after his graduation he received an appointment to become a tutor in the college, with the understanding that as soon as possible a professorship would be given him. What was he to do? His heart was set on the ministry; yet he was reluctant to say "No" to President Chaplin. His friends argued that in this young college, in the new and flourishing State of Maine, he would have an immediate and an increasing field of service to both science and religion. He finally accepted the position, but with the express statement that he would probably resign at the end of a year.

He was beginning to feel the pull of the mission field. It was not only the sailors and merchants who had heard the call of the far-off

places of the world; men of God had heard it, too, and they had responded. Carey and his colleagues heard it in England, and established the work in India. Judson, Nott, Hall and Newell heard it in America, and went out as the first American foreign missionaries. Judson had now been in Burma for nine years. His letters told of hardships and privations, yes; but they also told of great opportunities. Three years before, in June, 1819, after almost six years in Burma, Judson had baptized the first Burmese Christian convert. The prospects were "as bright as the promises of God." His reports caught the imagination of forward-looking Christians in America, and George Boardman, alert to the movements of his time, and facing honestly the implications of his Christian faith and call to the ministry, was tremendously stirred.

He entered upon his duties in the college in October of 1822; but although he considered himself unworthy to become a missionary, the idea of missionary service persisted in his mind. He thought about it, prayed about it, and read everything he could find about missions.

In November of 1822 his sister Harriet died. He had been extremely fond of her and her death at such an early age—she was only nine-

teen—brought him a keen realization of the brevity of life, and of his responsibility to God to use life to the maximum. And then something happened that made a decision imperative. Word came of the death of James Colman, a most promising young missionary to Burma, who had been one of the first to answer Judson's call for missionary helpers. Colman had sailed from Boston, in company with some missionary associates, late in 1817. He arrived in Rangoon in September of 1818, labored for a time in Arracan District, and died at Cox's Bazaar, Calcutta, July 4, 1822. Colman was just twenty-eight years old; he had had less than five years in India, and the news of his death brought grief to all the friends of foreign missions. Boardman read about it in a newspaper, and it made a tremendous impression upon him. He wrote his family:

"Our excellent missionary brother, James Colman, is no more. What a dark providence! He seemed to be destined to fill an important place in the field of missions. We trusted that by his assiduous labors, the poor Burmans would be richly blessed.... Let us pray that God may raise up others to fill the places of those who are taken from the field of labor. It is time for the Christian church to awake.... The calls for missionaries are loud

and often repeated. . . . If missionaries must be sent, they must also be supported. We must all put our hands to the work."

But the question persisted, What was *he* going to do about it? Later he wrote of the way in which the decision was made:

"Alas! (Colman) is very suddenly cut off in the beginning of his career. 'Who will go to fill his place?' 'I'll go.' This question and answer occurred to me in succession, as suddenly as the twinkling of an eye. From that moment, my attention became principally directed to the Burman mission, from which it has never since been diverted."

His desire to become a missionary now grew intense. He seemed able to think of little else. Finally, he could wait no longer. He went to President Chaplin to tell him that he simply must become a missionary. The president received the news with some personal disappointment. George was a most promising instructor, and he had hoped to have him as his successor in the presidency. He could not help seeing, however, that the young teacher was in the grip of a tremendous conviction, and he listened sympathetically; though he expressed the hope that Boardman might continue at the college for the present.

But George's decision had taken possession

of him, and he could not rest. In January of 1823 he visited Boston, "principally to converse on this subject with those who had the management of foreign missions." Then he went to Salem and had an interview with Dr. Bolles.<sup>1</sup> Here he met a number of ministers. He reports that "they encouraged me in this purpose and hoped that I might sail in a few months." By February he was writing his family:

"I feel comparatively little anxiety as to what part of the world I am sent, if God calls me there. It is of but little consequence where I live, or where I die. . . . And as for a resting-place for my body when I shall lay it aside, my bones can rest, my ashes sleep, as securely in Burma as in America. . . . I am willing to spend my days, and to breathe out my life, where duty shall call. . . . The great inquiry is, 'What does God require me to do?' Only let this question be satisfactorily answered, and all my doubts subside. In the strength of my Redeemer, I will press forward, and devote myself without reserve to his service."

He made a visit to his family to broach the idea in person. He found that his letters had prepared them for his decision and that they were sympa-

<sup>1</sup> Lucius Bolles, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Salem, was an active promoter of the foreign mission cause. At the time Boardman visited him in January, 1823, Doctor Bolles was a member of the Board of Managers of the Triennial Baptist Convention; in 1824 he became its assistant corresponding secretary, and in 1826 corresponding secretary—a position he filled until 1843.

thetic. His mother told him that from the moment of his conversion, she had hoped for, and looked forward to, his becoming a missionary. When he came to President Chaplin of the college with his final decision, the president, who had himself been keenly interested in the missionary movement among the churches of New England, readily gave his consent that this young man, whom he so much loved, should offer himself for foreign missionary service.

The Baptist Triennial Convention was soon to meet in Washington. Boardman felt that if he were ever to offer himself for missionary service, he should do so on that occasion. Accordingly, on April 12, 1823, he wrote the corresponding secretary and made a formal application for missionary appointment. On May 9, it was voted to have the standing committee in and about Boston inquire into his fitness to become a missionary, and on May 29, 1823, Boardman formally appeared before this standing committee. After hearing "a full account of his personal history, religious experience, and views relating to the work of missions," the committee voted to accept him as a missionary of the Board, with the understanding that he would go to Burma. The secretary was directed to inform

the college faculty of his appointment, and to ask that he be released as soon as possible from his work at the college.

The previous September Ann Hasseltine Judson had come home to America to attempt to rebuild her shattered health, and it was at first thought that Boardman would sail for Burma with her when she returned in June of 1823. His father, however, urged that George should have further preparation for missionary service by a course of study at Andover Theological Seminary. George, who had great respect for his father's judgment, seconded the request; the Missionary Board agreed, and instead of sailing with Mrs. Judson for Burma, he entered Andover.

Before he left Waterville, a group of his closest friends came to his room to bid him godspeed. Should they ever see him again? He was to have a few months at Andover, and then leave for Burma. The voyage alone would take over four months. Letters would be infrequent and long in coming. Missionary furloughs were unknown—a missionary stayed at his post until compelled to leave. A trying climate, improper food, and lack of adequate medical attention took heavy toll. Adoniram Judson had now been

in Burma continuously for ten years; Ann's brief visit to America had been an attempt to save her life; Colman had died at his post. What did the future hold for George Boardman?

It was a pleasant room in which they were gathered, on the third floor of the south college building. From its windows could then be seen the Kennebec River, the green fields opposite, the president's house, and a part of the village. George stood at the window for a moment, taking a last look at the river he had loved. Then turning to his friends he said: "Serve your Saviour unceasingly and faithfully, until death, and if it may not be your duty to be missionaries abroad, be missionaries at home." Prayer together, brief handclasps, a word of special farewell to his roommate, and he was gone. George Dana Boardman had set his face toward Burma.

**3**

**ANDOVER—CHARTING THE COURSE**



## ANDOVER—CHARTING THE COURSE

Andover, the oldest Congregational theological school in America, was a center of vital Christianity and missionary purpose. Here Adoniram Judson had met with Samuel J. Mills and the other young men of the famous "Haystack Prayer Meeting," and under Judson's leadership, they had formulated their purpose to go as missionaries to the non-Christian world. Out of this group of Andover students came the organization of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions—that sent out the first American foreign missionaries—and then, upon the Judsons becoming Baptists, the Baptist missionary organization, later known as the Baptist Missionary Union, and now called the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. Here at Andover was the Society of the Brethren, pledged to prayer for missions, with most of its membership determined upon missionary service. Today in the "Missionary Woods" at Andover, one may see a great boulder with the inscription:

## *Boardman of Burma*

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IN THE "MISSIONARY WOODS" ONCE EXTENDING TO THIS SPOT THE FIRST MISSIONARY STUDENTS OF ANDOVER SEMINARY WALKED AND TALKED ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, AND ON THIS SECLUDED KNOB MET TO PRAY. IN MEMORY OF THESE MEN

ADONIRAM JUDSON   SAMUEL NOTT   SAMUEL J. MILLS  
SAMUEL NEWELL   GORDON HALL   JAMES RICHARDS  
LUTHER RICE

WHOSE CONSECRATED PURPOSE TO CARRY THE GOSPEL TO THE HEATHEN WORLD LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE FIRST AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS. IN RECOGNITION OF THE 248 MISSIONARIES TRAINED IN ANDOVER SEMINARY AND IN GRATITUDE TO ALMIGHTY GOD, THIS STONE IS SET UP IN THE CENTENNIAL YEAR OF THE AMERICAN BOARD, 1910.

The spirit of Andover made a tremendous appeal to Boardman, and he felt that he was indeed on sacred ground. At that time there were in the Seminary about 150 students, several of whom were planning to enter missionary service. George Boardman, sensitive, enthusiastic, dominated by his missionary purpose, entered into this atmosphere and into his studies with great delight and earnestness. He had formerly disliked the study of languages, despite his boyhood proficiency in Latin; but now, eager to equip himself in every way for missionary service, he threw himself into the study of Hebrew with great enthusiasm, and was the more delighted

with the study because he saw it as specific preparation for the work of Bible translation and exposition in Burma. A month after he entered Andover, he joined the Society of the Brethren (July 22, 1823), and in September, when officers were elected for the ensuing year, he was made vice-president.

The influence of Samuel J. Mills was still strongly felt in Andover. Boardman thought of him as "a man of God," and pored over his *Memoirs*. He writes:

"I have just finished . . . his *Memoirs*. I have prayed 'Lord, make me like Samuel J. Mills.' Never did I read a work of human production which enkindled so much ardour, and excited so many desires to do good on an extensive scale as Mills' *Memoirs*."

The faculty was made up of men of distinguished reputation, real ability, and deep spiritual life. One of the students of that day<sup>1</sup> has described some of them: Ebenezer Porter, professor of Sacred Rhetoric, who "thinks slowly, and speaks still more slowly; deliberates well before he pens or utters a sentence; but when he has once got it out, it is perfect, so far as language is concerned"; Leonard Woods, professor of Theology, "a great thinker," whose mind was

<sup>1</sup> John Todd, *The Story of His Life*, pp. 97-100.

"a complete laboratory of metaphysics," who paid the Bible a reverence "that is deep and earnest," and taught that "what the sun is to the earth—light and heat—that the Bible is to the church"; Moses Stuart, professor of Sacred Literature, who "carried an enthusiasm in his nature that would open a mine of quicksilver in the most barren mountain"; James Murdock, professor of Ecclesiastical History, "the most instructive man in conversation that I have ever seen." From these men—scholarly, and possessed of a vital Christian experience and a missionary outlook—Boardman received the further intellectual and theological preparation and discipline that were such important factors in his later missionary work; and much more—something of the warmth and depth of their minds and spirits enriched his own life.

His vacations were given to active Christian work. He spent some time working in the interests of the Clarkson Society of Salem, a society organized to benefit the colored population of Salem. Early in 1825, at the request of the Missionary Board, he passed several weeks traveling through different parts of Maine in the interest of foreign missions. In the spring of 1825 he was directed to travel for a few weeks

in the West and South, as agent of the Baptist Convention, soliciting funds and speaking in the churches on the subject of missions.

Although Boardman was essentially a scholar and a lover of books, he was no recluse. He liked people, enjoyed congenial company, and had a very deep affection for his parents and brothers and sisters. His letters to them refer again and again to the pleasure he took in their company and his ever present concern for their welfare. Now that he had definitely decided to become a foreign missionary, he began to give serious thought to the subject of marriage. Realizing that a great deal of his future usefulness, as well as happiness, would depend upon the wife who should make a home for him, share in his work, and be his life companion, he prayed that he might be led to the right person.

When news of Colman's death reached America, one of the papers had published a poem reflecting the sorrow felt by all friends of foreign missions:

"Tis the voice of deep sorrow from India's shore,  
The flower of our churches is withered, is dead,  
The gem that shone brightly will sparkle no more,  
And the tears of the Christian profusely are shed.

Mourn, daughters of Arracan, mourn!  
The rays of that star, clear and bright,  
That so sweetly on Chittagong shone,  
Are shrouded in black clouds of night,  
For Colman is gone!

The poem made a deep impression upon George Boardman. Apparently it had been written by some one who felt as he did the tragedy of Colman's death, one who shared his own eager interest in the mission in Burma. He inquired about the author, found that she was a Miss Sarah Hall—of Salem—and did not rest until he had met her.

And what an attractive person she was: of medium height, graceful, with blue eyes and light brown hair—the first impression was one of gentleness and graciousness. Though she was at times almost painfully shy, as Boardman came to know her better he found that her gentleness was blended with firmness and strength. She had an exceptionally keen mind, and from earliest girlhood had been a poet of no mean ability. Her verse falls rather strangely on modern ears, but gives abundant evidence of a spirit sensitive, warm, and with a love for the beautiful and the excellent. Her personality, natural gifts, and Christian devotion deeply impressed young

Boardman. He soon learned that she, like himself, had been greatly stirred by reading the story of the heroic life of Samuel J. Mills, and that she, too, longed to help bring the gospel to the non-Christian world. It is not surprising that the friendship between George and Sarah progressed rapidly, and that George found in her one eager and glad to share his ministry to Burma.

Daughter of Ralph and Abiah Hall, Sarah Hall was born in Alstead, New Hampshire, November 4, 1803. While she was a little girl her parents had moved to Salem. The home was a modest one, and Sarah was early trained in those habits of industry, thoughtfulness, and self-denial which distinguished her throughout life. She was the eldest of thirteen children and early had to assume household tasks and care for her younger brothers and sisters. But she loved books, and, when home duties kept her from school, studied by herself at night. It was no easy task that the young girl set herself: Butler's *Analogy*, Paley's *Evidences*, Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, logic, geometry—these were some of her studies. One winter, when she was teaching her little brothers at home, she writes of having "more leisure to devote to my Latin."

There was nothing superficial in her intellectual development, and by the time she was seventeen, she herself had taught for a while in a district school. The mental discipline of these early years was to prove of inestimable value when she later studied Burmese and Karen. Even as a little girl, she kept a journal, and the brief entries show an unusual eagerness for self-improvement; the more remarkable since she had to depend so much upon her own initiative, with little help from teachers and with few books available. She wrote for religious journals when she was comparatively young, both prose articles and poetry—and it was recognized that her verse had merit.

When Ann Hasseltine Judson was back in America (September, 1822—June, 1823), she visited Salem, then a center of missionary interest, and there one afternoon Sarah Hall met her, though under circumstances that Sarah long remembered with acute embarrassment. Mrs. Judson had addressed a missionary meeting. Sarah listened eagerly. Suddenly, someone proposed that, in the presence of one who had known Colman in Burma, the author of the "Elegy," herself about to go to Burma as a missionary, should read the poem. Sarah's shy protests were

unheeded, and with burning cheeks she read the poem. Little did she think, in the confusion of that moment, that in a remarkable way she was destined to become Ann Judson's successor in Burma.

This, then, was the modest, gentle, gifted young woman who was soon to become the wife of George Dana Boardman, and to give herself with rare ability, courage, and devotion to the cause of Christ in Burma.

The time now drew near for Boardman's ordination. While he was a member of the Waterville Baptist Church, the church in North Yarmouth where his father had been pastor six years and was still remembered with honor and affection, unanimously requested the privilege of his ordination with them, at their own expense. In a fine spirit of co-operation, the Congregational Church of Yarmouth offered their church building for the service, as "it was larger and more accessible than the Baptist meeting-house on the hill," and there, on February 16, 1825, George Boardman was ordained. The ordination sermon was preached by President Chaplin, of Waterville College, from the text, Psalm 71:16, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God." The ordination prayer was made

by Dr. Lucius Bolles, assistant corresponding secretary of the Missionary Board and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Salem. It was a solemn and moving occasion. Members of all the Yarmouth churches crowded into the spacious auditorium, friends from Waterville and elsewhere had come in large numbers, and—crowning happiness of the day for George—Sarah Hall had come up from Salem with Dr. Bolles for the ordination,

As far as was possible, Boardman had now completed his preparation for his missionary service. All that remained was for the Missionary Board to authorize his sailing, and for this word he eagerly waited.

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FAR HORIZONS



## FAR HORIZONS

It was while Boardman was in Washington on one of his journeys in the interests of foreign missions that the word finally came. It was in the form of an urgent message from the Foreign Mission Executive Committee in Boston directing him to make immediate preparations to sail for Calcutta in two weeks. He went at once to Boston to consult with the Committee and to make the final arrangements for his sailing.

On Sunday, July 3, 1825, in the First Baptist Church of Salem, he was married to Sarah Hall. The following day they left for Philadelphia, where they were to embark. July 16, they sailed from Philadelphia on the *Asia*, a new ship launched but a few weeks before. The captain, Mr. Sheed, was a fine man, and the accommodations assigned the Boardmans were for that day exceptionally good. Friends in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York vied with one another in their efforts to provide for the comfort of the young missionaries, for George and Sarah had won a large place in the hearts of many people.

A number of gifts were sent them, both for their use on the voyage and for the home they looked forward to establishing in Burma. Of these gifts, perhaps those treasured most were the books which, as George wrote later, added greatly to the range and completeness of their scanty library, and certainly were a source of delight to these two booklovers.

The voyage was a happy one. Officers and men were kind and courteous. With all her reserve and shyness, Sarah was innately gracious, and George had a gift for friendship. Their shipmates found them such delightful traveling companions that when the voyage was over, one of the officers wrote Secretary Bolles:

"In my many journeyings through life (and they have been many) I never met with any travelers so completely delightful to associate and converse with, and for whom I felt such affection and esteem."

Every Sunday morning, George conducted a service for officers and crew, and he and Sarah had their own worship in the cabin every evening. The days were spent in reading and study, and in writing long letters to their friends at home—to be dispatched when they should pass a west-bound vessel. They had a Burmese grammar, prepared by Adoniram Judson, and

kept at work on that. All in all, the days passed pleasantly. George and Sarah were very happy. Each found delight in the other's companionship, and they were at last on their way to the missionary service toward which both had so eagerly looked forward.

On December 2, 1825—139 days after they had left Philadelphia—they arrived at Calcutta. The English Baptist missionaries there had had word of the Boardmans' coming and had made preparations for the welcome of these young missionaries from America. Soon after the ship arrived in sight of the city, George H. Hough, the American missionary printer, came on board, welcomed the Boardmans warmly, and brought them news of conditions in Burma.

Months before war had broken out between the British and Burmese over the refusal of the British to deliver to the Burmese the refugees who had fled from Burmese cruelty to the British-controlled territory. With the outbreak of the war all foreigners in Burmese territory were in the utmost danger. The Houghs and the Wades, missionary families that had preceded the Boardmans from America and gone at first to Burma, had narrowly escaped martyrdom there, and had had to flee to Calcutta. Judson

and Dr. Jonathan Price, another American missionary, had been thrown into prison at Ava, and for months Mrs. Judson had been making heroic efforts to secure their release. For a few weeks, there had been an armistice, but now the war had been renewed. It would have been unwise for the Boardmans to attempt to go to Burma, and they could only acquiesce in the proposal that, for the present, they make their home in Calcutta. Soon they, with Mr. and Mrs. Wade and Mrs. Colman, widow of James Colman, were established in a house at Chittapore, some four miles from Calcutta. Here, in this American home in India, the Boardmans began at once the study of the Burmese language under a Burman teacher. They soon were able to begin reading Judson's Burmese translation of the New Testament. Before long they were studying other Burmese literature, such as a history of one of the incarnations of Gautama Buddha.

And during these days when they were detained in India, they really began their active missionary work. A number of churches, representing several denominations, were already established in Calcutta. Of the Baptist churches, two—one in Lall Bazaar and another in Circular Road—held services for Europeans; and in one

of these Mr. Boardman preached every two weeks.

In April, 1826, when the Boardmans had been in India some five months, peace was declared between Great Britain and Burma and the war at long last was over. At the close of the rains, the Wades returned to Burma. The Boardmans were anxious to accompany them; but the condition of Mrs. Boardman's health and the very urgent request of the missionaries in Calcutta that Mr. Boardman continue there for a time, raised the question whether they should not defer their going for a little while longer. Boardman had been very successful in his work as acting pastor of the Circular Road Church, Calcutta, and the missionaries asked that he continue with them for the present. He wrote to the missionaries in Burma that he was eager to join them, but he would abide by their decision. In due time, the reply came back: the Boardmans were to remain in Calcutta for the present. And so for another year—or until March, 1827—George and Sarah remained in Calcutta, he acting as pastor of the Circular Road Church, and both of them continuing their study of Burmese.

In October of 1826, a little daughter, Sarah Ann, was born, and brought a new happiness

to the home in Circular Road. George enthusiastically wrote home to America that she was "a lovely baby," and that the one thing that he wanted for her was that she might be as much like Sarah as possible.

Finally, on March 20, 1827, they set sail for Burma, the land that had so long been the goal of their eager desires.

The Burma-British War lasted from May of 1824 until April of 1826. During twenty-one months of this time, Adoniram Judson had been a prisoner, first at Ava and then at Aungbingle, undergoing the most terrible sufferings—for six months shackled with one pair of fetters, for nine months with three, and for two months with five! The heroism of Ann Hasseltine Judson during this period, as she spent herself in every possible effort to alleviate the sufferings of the prisoners and secure their release, is one of the great heritages of the Christian church and the foreign missionary movement. When the war was over, the Judsons returned to Rangoon with the expectation of resuming their work there. Further consideration indicated the wisdom of another plan. As a result of the war, the Arakan District—between the mountains and the



west coast—and the Tenasserim District—the long, narrow strip on the east, stretching out from the Salween to the bottom most tip of Burma—were ceded to the British, and the best strategy for further missionary work in the Province indicated that this district should now be occupied.

Judson had been very helpful in negotiations leading to the conclusion of the war, and the Civil Commissioner of Burma, Mr. Crawfurd, invited the missionary to accompany him on an exploring expedition to select a site for the Government headquarters in the Province. They chose as a location for the new city a peninsula at the mouth of the Salween, and named it Amherst after the Governor General of the Province. Here, on the beach, the English flag was hoisted, and a salute fired. Judson read the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah and offered prayer; and then possession of the land was taken in the name of King George and the Honorable East India Company.

With his usual decisiveness, Judson determined that he and Ann should be the first settlers of Amherst, and they moved there from Rangoon. Two days after settling in the new town, Judson was compelled to leave Ann to

return to Ava, the Burmese capital, to help with the negotiation of the treaty. While he was absent on this mission, Ann Hasseltine Judson died—October 24, 1826. Her body was laid to rest under a hopia tree near the shore of the Bay of Bengal, and their little daughter, Maria, was left motherless.

To Amherst, the Boardmans came when they finally reached Burma. They had left Calcutta on March 20, but their ship was detained in the Hoogly River and it was not until April 17, 1827, that they landed at Amherst. Only Mr. Wade was there to greet them, for Judson and Mrs. Wade had gone to Moulmein in the hope of improving the health of little Maria.

Here at Amherst, upon his return from Moulmein, George Dana Boardman first met Adoniram Judson. It was a moment to which Boardman had long looked forward. Here was the leader of the Mission in Burma, the man who had laid the foundations, persevered in the face of what seemed insuperable difficulties, who had but recently come from months of imprisonment and torture, and now had lost his beloved Ann; and yet, who, in the face of it all, maintained a radiant and triumphant faith. George Boardman felt himself in the presence of real

greatness—small wonder that he questioned whether he was worthy to be the colleague of such a man. As the months went by, his admiration and respect for Dr. Judson were to deepen, and in time there grew up a strong affection between the two missionaries, so much alike in their untiring industry, intellectual grasp, missionary passion, and absolute devotion to Jesus Christ.

On the twenty-fourth of April, Maria Judson died; and it was Boardman who was called upon to make the little coffin and to take charge of the preparations for the funeral. Writing of this sad experience, he says:

“Dear Brother Judson is visited with breach upon breach. But he is quiet. After leaving the grave, we had a conversation on the kindness and tender mercies of our heavenly Father. Brother J. seemed carried above his grief. Religion bears our spirits up.”

Now that the Boardmans had joined the Wades and Judson in Burma, the missionaries counseled as to the best steps to take for the fuller occupation of the Province. It was decided to open a new station at Moulmein—the Boardmans going there, the Wades remaining at Amherst, and Dr. Judson dividing his time between the two stations. As the cities were only

twenty-five miles apart and on the same river, this could easily be arranged. On May 28, 1827, a year and a half after they had landed in Calcutta, George and Sarah Boardman and their little daughter settled in Moulmein, as the first permanent missionaries there and the founders of that great mission station.



**5**

**BEGINNINGS AT MOULMEIN**



## BEGINNINGS AT MOULMEIN

What of the country where George and Sarah Boardman were to make their home? Burma is that part of Asia that lies between China and Siam on the north and east and India and the Bay of Bengal on the west. It is a country some twelve hundred miles in length, with an area, in Burma proper, of over 168,573 square miles; three-fifths of it hemmed in by mountain ranges and the remaining two-fifths by the sea. Geographically, Burma has roughly three divisions: The *Western*, which includes Arracan, the Chin and Kachin Hills; the *Central*, made up of the basin and delta of the Irrawaddy River, together with the basin and flatlands at the mouths of the Sittang and Salween Rivers; and the *Eastern*, made up of the Shan and Karennei States and the district of Tenasserim. There are great mountain ranges, some of them towering eleven thousand feet above sea-level, and many of them covered with almost impenetrable forests. Below Mandalay, there is much flat country, and beginning at Prome, the great delta

of the mighty Irrawaddy, whose yellow silt greets the traveler far out to sea.

Burma has a hot, humid climate. From May to October scarcely a day passes without a heavy rainfall, and then for months there is no rain at all. When the heavy rains come, following the dry season, the ground fairly steams, and though the beauty of the foliage at the rainy season is almost breath-taking, with the rains also come swarms of insects, with mold and mildew everywhere. This enervating climate was to take its toll of the health of both George and Sarah.

The land is rich in natural resources—gold, silver, precious stones (rubies, jade, amber), oil, and rare woods—but the chief source of income, as well as the major article of diet, is rice; still raised by fairly primitive methods.

Moulmein was in Tenasserim, the district that embraced the narrow strip of territory between the Bay of Bengal and a range of hills that divides Burma from Siam; a hilly country, in some places almost mountainous, intersected by countless streams. The population was principally Mon, or Talaing (a people related to the Siamese); but there were also many Burmese, and it was to the Burmese, the dominant race

of Burma proper, that George and Sarah Boardman first turned their attention.

A high-spirited, happy-go-lucky people they found them. Sarah's feminine heart was delighted with their colorful dress; both men and women wore white or cream-colored jackets, with ankle-length silk skirts of brilliant hue. Many of the men favored tight-fitting pink or orange silk turbans, and every woman wore in her hair, piled high on the head in a curious fashion, freshly cut flowers; and often jeweled ornaments as well. Sarah soon learned that the position of the Burmese woman was far superior to that of her Indian sister. Indeed, no women in the East are freer, for though a Burmese woman may not outwardly seem to dominate, in reality she manages the household, acts as business head of the family, and is the worker and money-maker.

The Burmese belong to the Tibetan group, and are dark of skin, somewhat short in stature, thick-set, and with Mongolian features. The Boardmans found that they had an advanced culture, a complicated language and an extensive literature, much of it religious. A great deal of this was entirely written in Pali, a "sacred language," allied to the Sanskrit, with an alphabet

that to a Westerner looks like a series of hooks-and-eyes.

The religion of the Burmese is Buddhism, with its denial of desire, belief in a series of rebirths—with the consequent command against taking life in any form—and a complicated system of merits and demerits. Founded in India—by Gautama Buddha in 588 B.C.—it has now no large following in India; but it spread to other lands and is today the principal religion of Burma, Ceylon and Japan, with many adherents in China. In Burma one sees everywhere Buddhist pagodas, and monasteries whose monks, or *pongyis*, daily go about the villages with their begging bowls. There is no caste system in Burma, and the monastery school is open to all without fees. Here every Buddhist boy is taught at least reading and writing, the five universal commandments, the five subsidiary rules, as well as the Pali formulae to be recited at the pagoda.

When George and Sarah arrived in Burma, most of the country was an independent kingdom. The Burmese and the British—who through the activities of the East India Company were entrenched in India—had already come into conflict and the first of the Burmese-British wars (1824–26) had been fought. There were to be

subsequent wars—in 1852 and 1885—through which the Burmese king was to be overthrown and Burma to become first a Province of the Indian Empire, and then as now a Crown Colony in the British Commonwealth of Nations. But when George and Sarah went to live in Moulmein all this was far in the future. The Treaty of Peace, signed by the British and Burmese Commissioners on February 24, 1826, had provided for the payment by the Burmese of a money indemnity and the cession to the British Government of Assam, Arracan, and the coast of Tenasserim, including the portion of the province of Martaban east of the Salween River. Burma proper was still ruled over by a despotic king, who steadfastly refused to give any measure of religious toleration to the subjects within his dominion; but the district of Tenasserim, where these restrictions did not apply, afforded an excellent opportunity for missionary work.

While the new town of Amherst had been settled upon as the capital of the ceded territory, and the Civil Commissioner, Mr. Crawfurd, looked for its rapid growth, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Sir Archibald Campbell, regarded Moulmein as a more strategic location for his headquarters. Situated at the junction

of the Salween, Gyine and Ataran Rivers, some twenty-five miles north of Amherst, Moulmein, too, was just being hewn out of the jungle. But it had a more accessible harbor, and was better protected from the southwest monsoon than Amherst, and in Moulmein, accordingly, Sir Archibald Campbell and his army established themselves. The city grew rapidly. Though Amherst, at the close of the year, had 230 houses and a population of 1,200, Moulmein could boast a population of 20,000; its beautiful hills were already being dotted with the Buddhist pagodas for which the city is now noted. Moulmein was easily the center, in population and importance, of this part of Burma.

Sir Archibald Campbell offered the mission a plot of ground, a secluded but beautiful spot on the bank of the river directly opposite the town of Martaban, and sufficient for a large mission station. Here George and Sarah built a simple house—it cost only 250 rupees, or about ninety dollars. It was their first real home in Burma and was, of course, very different from any house the Boardmans had seen in America. Because of the heavy rains that would flood any ordinary cellar, it had to be built on high posts, and it looked as though it stood up on stilts. These

posts and the floors were of teak, that hard wood that best withstands the ravages of the white ants, the termite scourge of India and Burma. The walls were of woven bamboo mats, and the roof of thatch. There was no glass for the windows, but heavy wooden shutters that could be closed in the rainy season, while screens of "expanded metal"—about the coarseness of chicken-wire, but much heavier—afforded some measure of protection against animals and thieves when the shutters were open.

There was need for such protection, for the site selected was a mile from the military cantonment and so near to the jungle as to be easily accessible to wild beasts. Leopards, elephants and tigers were common; cobras and other poisonous snakes often seen. And the town of Martaban, across the river from the Boardman home, was a known resort of robbers and desperados. The Boardmans had been urged to build their home within the military cantonment, where they would be safe from these dangers; but George and Sarah felt that a residence within the official circle would separate them from the people; and rather than risk this they preferred to brave the dangers of beasts and robbers.

It was not long before these dangers became very real. About a month after they had settled in their new home they were suddenly awakened one morning, just before daybreak, and discovered that robbers had broken into the little bamboo house. Everything was in confusion; trunks and boxes had been broken open and rifled; many of their most valued possessions were gone. The little things that had helped to make the bamboo house a real home—a mirror given them by their friends in Philadelphia, Sarah's prized silver spoons—had been carried off. George's watch had been taken. Most alarming, their keys were gone—the robbers could have easy access to all their possessions at any time.

And then Sarah happened to look at the mosquito net which covered their beds. There, just above the pillows, she saw a large hole cut in the net. It was only too evident that they had barely escaped with their lives. Sarah caught the baby more tightly to her, and she and George breathed a little prayer of thankfulness that their lives had been spared. What did a watch and a few spoons matter so long as they had each other!

Perhaps the animals terrified Sarah more than the robbers, though she tried her best to be brave

about them. Tigers and leopards frequently roamed very near the house, and at night their howling was only too plainly heard. Once an animal sprang up on their verandah and savagely attacked a man who was sitting there, though the beast was frightened off before the man was much hurt. "Oh," thought Sarah, "if we could have just one *little* room safe from all these dangers"—and then she pushed the thought away from her as unworthy of a missionary.

Sarah found that housekeeping in the tropics has its special difficulties. All milk and drinking water had to be boiled, and with no ice, food spoiled very quickly. There was the constant problem of insects: numerous mosquitoes, and white ants that could destroy a pair of shoes over night and that were a fearful menace to George's loved books.

And then there was the night of the fire—a wind roaring like a hurricane, the mountains to the east of them all ablaze, the crackling of the burning brush, the thick smoke and cinders blowing toward them. There seemed no hope for the flimsy bamboo house. They hastily packed up a few clothes and anxiously awaited the moment when they would have to run out into the night and abandon a burning home. Then, when

the fire was but a few rods from the house, suddenly, the wind ceased, the fire subsided—the little home had been preserved.

As time went the more obvious dangers lessened. After the robbery Sir Archibald Campbell insisted that the Boardmans have two Sepoys, as the native Indian soldiers in the British Army in India and Burma are called, to guard their home. After a while, too, other settlers built their homes near the bamboo house, and there was a greater measure of safety.

George was now beginning to speak the language with greater fluency, and he sought opportunities for talking with the people about him, and making known, in daily informal conversations, that he was a religious teacher. He talked with people as he met them in the bazaar, or as they passed by the little roadside shelter, or *zayat*, where it is customary for religious teachers in the East to sit and converse with any who care to stop. He found it easy to bring the conversation around to the purpose for which he had come to Moulmein, and many of the Buddhists seemed ready to give him a friendly hearing. Soon visitors found their way to the little house. Early one Sunday morning in July, 1827, eight Burmans came inquiring, "Teacher,

is this your day for worship? We have come to hear you preach; we wish to know what this new religion is." Here was the opportunity for which he had been preparing. He asked his visitors to be seated, and for several hours they talked together—the visitors plying him with questions and Boardman explaining the principal teachings of Christianity. There were other inquirers. On July 21, Boardman wrote in his diary:

"Several persons called today, to whom I spoke on the concerns of their souls—they were quite attentive. Among them were three merchants from Rangoon, who said they were about to return. Remembering that they are blessed who sow their seed beside *all* waters, and that we know not which shall prosper, this or that, I conversed with them a little; and considering they might never have another opportunity of hearing the Gospel, or of learning the way of salvation, I gave each of them a small portion of the Scriptures. This seed of life, though it should not find a friendly soil immediately, may hereafter be lodged in some distant spot, where it will bring forth fruit unto life eternal. One of the merchants read to the others for some time, and they departed, saying they would read the books daily."

We who have all our lives been able to join with others in Christian worship every Sunday perhaps miss the full meaning of Christian fel-

lowship, and find it hard to realize the aloneness felt by the Boardmans as the only Christians in this great Buddhist city. To try to meet in some degree this craving for Christian fellowship, and to give some especially concrete expression to their common devotion to Christ their Lord, it was their custom on Sunday, before they had gathered a congregation, to have a little service together. George would read a sermon, they would have a time of prayer, and frequently, though there were but the two of them, they would celebrate the Lord's Supper.

The visitors kept coming. On August 3, Boardman's diary records:

"Twenty-five or thirty persons have visited us today. Although they do not all come for the purpose of obtaining Christian instruction, yet they afford us an opportunity of saying something about Christ, which they generally hear with attention. *Some* come for the express purpose of being instructed; and when we tell them we know but very little of their language, they reply, 'Do speak to us according to your ability.' If, at anytime, they do not readily comprehend our meaning, they request us to repeat our words again and again, till they understand us fully."

People were curious about the white teachers and their baby. One day George and Sarah took

the little Sarah Ann and went out for a walk. In no time at all they were surrounded by a group of children. How their tongues babbled: "Cheze-an" ("Look at that"), they called to one another, "a white baby! Can it be real? Do you think it is white all over? And the mamma—her *sidone* (hair) is so different from ours. And she has blue eyes!" "What a funny way to hold a baby," said one little girl, small brother astride her hip, as she saw how George held Baby Sarah in his arms. They were so eager—a bit shy, and yet friendly, too. George and Sarah longed to tell them the story of the Baby Jesus, and the loving Father-God who watched over them; but their knowledge of Burmese was not yet adequate.

With their elders, who were patient with George's attempts to put into Burmese "the unsearchable riches of Christ," more progress was made. One day he writes that a company of Burmans and Talaings (Mons) came to see him, and talked with him until he was so exhausted that he could talk no more. George was greatly helped that day by a man from Amherst, who was deeply interested in the gospel and boldly announced his own commitment to Christ, and who attempted to explain the truths of Christi-

anity to his fellow countrymen. Another day a Burmese merchant, to whom George had given some books, called to ask questions on some points he did not understand. When he was at the house, the head man of the village also came, and the two, with the Boardmans' Burman teacher—who had been giving evidence of some interest—had a real discussion of Christian history and doctrine.

Thus the work at Moulmein grew steadily. Not so, however, the mission at Amherst. For one thing, the first fond hopes for the building up of that city had not been fulfilled. The population, far from increasing, was gradually diminishing. Though Mr. and Mrs. Wade had exerted themselves to the utmost, had gathered a group of inquirers, and had established a girls' school, it was finally decided that the prospects for the future did not warrant the continuance of a mission station at Amherst, and that it would be better to have the Wades join the Boardmans at Moulmein, so that both families, with Dr. Judson, might concentrate on the growing work there. Accordingly, on October 14, 1827, Mr. and Mrs. Wade and Dr. Judson left Amherst and settled with the Boardmans at Moulmein. This station, originally opened by the Board-

mans, was established on solid foundations, and now became the headquarters of Baptist mission work in Burma. The girls' school, that had been begun in Amherst, was moved to Moulmein and carried on there under the able direction of Mrs. Boardman and Mrs. Wade. Out of this girls' school in Moulmein has since developed that noble work for the education of girls, which, with the excellent schools in Moulmein, Mandalay, Kemmendine, and throughout Burma, has been such a splendid evidence of successful missionary endeavor and such a large factor in bringing the life abundant to the girls and women of that land.

Boardman had himself opened a school for boys—the forerunner of the present Judson Boys' High School in Moulmein, and Judson College, and all the other schools and high schools that make up the large educational work carried on today by Baptists in Burma.

Just about this time (October, 1827) Boardman came to know intimately Maung Ing, one of the first fruits of Judson's labors and now a promising preacher. Baptized March 4, 1821, ordained early in 1827, he had now returned from a visit to Mergui—away to the south of Moulmein—and was most hopeful of the pos-

sibility of having the gospel penetrate that part of Burma. This hope was later to be realized in a remarkable way.

In December, one of Boardman's dearest wishes was gratified: he was able to unite with Christians of Burma in a communion service. True, there were but two Burmese Christians with them; but Judson conducted the service, and the occasion was one of solemnity and joy.

Something of the depth, honesty and practical mysticism of George Dana Boardman's life may be seen in the fact that about this time he went through a period of heart-searching which made for spiritual growth and led to a new advance and a higher level in his Christian life. This experience of Boardman's paralleled somewhat a similar experience of Judson's, and shows again the remarkable community of spirit of the two men. Under date of February 21, 1828, Boardman writes in his diary:

"An important defect in my Christian character consists in not aiming at sufficiently high attainments in holiness. I sometimes think if my *circumstances* were different I should lead a more holy life. But I think, again, that the man who does not live as well as he can under *present* circumstances would not, in all probability, live so in any change of circumstances whatever."

He felt within himself a need for striving toward higher standards, yet for a time battled with a human disinclination to adopt such a course. After a few months of intense inner struggle the conflict was resolved, and on June 8, his diary records that the decision had been made. He had come to see that a Christian must be always growing in apprehension of the glorious implications and outreaches of the gospel; and he determined to keep moving to ever higher levels of Christian experience; and never to be complacent about or satisfied with a static Christian life. In writing Secretary Bolles a long letter about this experience, he said:

"Do any ask if I regret having engaged in this work? Were I to answer 'Yes,' I should do violence to all the feelings of my heart. No—so long as this heart beats, this blood flows, or this tongue can move, I will, through grace, rejoice in embarking and employing my all in disseminating the glorious Gospel of the blessed God in these lands of darkness and of the shadow of death."

The period of conflict was over, and his heart was at peace.

The work at Moulmein continued to grow; there had been several baptisms, and by now a little church had been established.



## KO THA BYU AND THE KARENS



## KO THA BYU AND THE KARENS

It was about this time that something occurred that was to be of supreme importance in determining the field in which Mr. Boardman was to make his unique contribution to the Christian missionary movement. This was the baptism of Ko Tha BYU, the first Karen convert to Christianity.

The Karens were a wild jungle people occupying the mountains of lower Burma. They were a group of Indo-Chinese tribes, divided into three main groups according to their language differences: the Sgaw, the Pwo, and the Bwe. While there are a number of distinct races in Burma, these Karens, and the Burmese, Shans, and Chins, are the principal races of the country. In the early days the Karens were persecuted and driven back into the jungle, and they lived principally in remote mountain villages. Though they had no written language, they had a great body of tradition, handed down from generation to generation. It remarkably paralleled some parts of the Old Testament, and so prepared

them in a certain way to accept the Christian message.

To this wild jungle people Ko Tha Byu belonged. He was born in a village near Bassein, in 1778. He lived with his parents until he was fifteen, and was—as he himself later admitted—"a wicked and ungovernable boy." He left home and became a robber and a murderer. How many murders he had committed or been accessory to he himself did not know, though he thought it was more than thirty. After the Burmese war he went to Rangoon and for a time was a servant of Missionary Hough's. Later, after he had left Mr. Hough's service, he got into difficulties and was about to be sold into slavery for debt, when one of the Burman Christians, Ko Shway-bay, paid the debt; and by Burmese law Ko Tha Byu became his servant. Ko Tha Byu had a most violent temper, and would fly into rages. Ko Shway-bay finally despaired of making any impression upon him, and when Mr. Judson offered to pay the debt and take Ko Tha Byu into his own employ, Ko Shway-bay was glad to agree. So this erstwhile criminal came into Judson's household.

It was not long before the influence of Judson's life and character began to make an im-

pression upon the former murderer and robber. Little by little the missionaries saw that he gave evidence of real repentance and of faith in the Crucified Christ, and asked that he might be baptized. The little Burman Church at Moulmein was slow to perceive the change, and reluctant to receive into its membership a man from this despised jungle race, with so black a past record. Ko Tha Byu persisted. He studied diligently in order to learn to read the Burmese Bible, and finally the church had to admit that the change in his life had been so remarkable that they could no longer defer his baptism. Before the day of baptism arrived, however, there was a change in Mission plans which had a far-reaching effect, both for Ko Tha Byu and for the Mission in Burma.

This change was the decision to open a new mission station in Tavoy. The Board at home were anxious that the Burma missionaries should enlarge the field of their labors, reach out and occupy additional territory. It seemed unwise to try to establish another station in territory under the control of the Burman Government. At length the missionaries on the field, after consultation with the Board at home, agreed that a new station should be opened in Tavoy, in

a part of the territory ceded to the British, where missionary work could be carried on with the minimum of interference from the Burman Government. With Tavoy selected for the site of the new station, the question was, Which of the missionaries should open the station and establish work there? Much thought and prayer were given the problem, and the missionaries finally agreed that the Boardmans in all that they had done in Moulmein had shown themselves peculiarly adapted to the task of laying foundations and building up a new work, and that they, therefore, should open Tavoy, as they had opened Moulmein, while Judson and the Wades continued the work at Moulmein.

It was not easy for George and Sarah to acquiesce in this decision and leave Moulmein. They had spent nearly a year in building up the work there, had bravely met and surmounted the early difficulties, perils and losses, and were beginning to see the results of their labors, both in a better material equipment and in the increasing interest of the people of Moulmein. They had in a remarkable way won the confidence and love of those among whom they worked, and they had come to think of Moulmein as home. If they *had* to move, they would prefer

to go to Arracan, the scene of the early labors of Colman, whose death had been the means of drawing both of them to Burma. Yet they felt that something more than their personal inclination was involved. They had come to Burma in response to God's call; they wanted to do his will, and when the best judgment of their "more judicious brethren" and their own convictions as to God's will in the matter seemed to indicate that they should go to Tavoy, to Tavoy they went—"in simple obedience to what we could consider as nothing else than an indication of the divine will."

The Boardmans were accompanied to the new station by four boys from the school, a Siamese Christian, and Ko Tha Byu—whose baptism was deferred until they should arrive at Tavoy. On March 29, 1828, Mr. Boardman, his family, and this little group, embarked for Tavoy. They touched at Amherst, and as the ship lay at anchor there, the Boardmans went ashore to visit the graves of Ann Hasseltine Judson and little Maria. Amherst seemed "a gloomy, melancholy place; the burial place of many of our hopes respecting the prosperity of this mission." The mission house was in ruins, and the graves of Ann and little Maria were simply enclosed

within a wooden fence, "with not even a stone to tell the stranger who lies there."

The ship left Amherst Harbor April 1, and the party arrived at Tavoy on April 9, 1828. Tavoy is on a low plain, surrounded by high mountains on three sides. It was a much smaller city than Moulmein—only about nine thousand inhabitants, of whom six thousand were Burmese. Tavoy was a stronghold of Buddhism, and boasted nearly a thousand pagodas and more than a hundred monasteries of Buddhist priests. The city seemed well laid out, and people and city gave evidence of more comfort and prosperity than were apparent in Moulmein.

The little party were welcomed to Tavoy by Captain Burney, Civil Commissioner for the Tavoy District, and in a few days George and Sarah had secured a house and were settled in their new home. The house was much like the one in Moulmein, of teakwood and bamboo, high on posts, for Tavoy, like Moulmein, has torrential rains. And Tavoy was even more isolated than Moulmein. George wrote home: "We are now more excluded from intercourse with the world than ever. But one or two ships in a year come to Tavoy, and I am told no ship whatever has ever come direct from Calcutta."

But they did not stop to fret about the loneliness, and the isolation of their new home. George began at once to hold services in the Burmese language, which from the very start were fairly well attended.

On May 16, 1828, Boardman's diary records a momentous event:

"Repaired early in the morning to a neighboring [pond], and administered Christian baptism to Ko Tha Byu, the Karen Christian who accompanied us from Moulmein. May we often have the pleasure of witnessing such scenes. . . . Perhaps God has a work for him to do among his countrymen. He is very zealous in declaring what he knows of the truth."

God did indeed have a work for Ko Tha Byu. This wild Karen robber-murderer had become a new creature in Christ Jesus, and he went out as a flaming apostle to the Karen villages, telling in his own simple but positive way the story of God's love and forgiveness. The fall of man, man's need of a Savior, the fullness of Christ, the blessedness of heaven—these were his subjects, and as one who had heard him said, "He used these thoughts like an auger in drilling a rock: It was round, round, round, and round, round, round, until the object was accomplished." Within the year Boardman was writing of him:

"Ko Tha Byu has concluded, with our approbation, to go out on a missionary tour of several weeks. It is surprising how magnanimous a naturally weak man becomes when the spirit of Christ and the love of souls inspire him. This poor Karen, who, to say the least, does not excel in intellectual endowment or human learning, is continually devising new and judicious plans of doing good."

The preaching of Ko Tha Byu was most effective. Soon he made plans to go to such important centers as Mergui, Siam and Bassein—"his native place"—to preach to the Karens in these districts. One old Karen chieftain offered to take him by boat to Mergui, and promised to see that he would be taken from one Karen village to another. Early and late he was busy telling his fellow Karens what Christ had done for him. And always, after his tours, he came back to Boardman to inform him of the response of the Karens, to ask his help with questions or problems that were too much for him, to devise new ways for reaching out into the Karen villages with the gospel, to gain a larger understanding of the truths of Christianity, and by the contagion of Boardman's own life and spirit to find himself growing more and more toward fullness of stature in Christ Jesus.

Among others who were baptized and brought into the church at this time was Ma Ay, Ko Tha Byu's wife. She, like her husband, had been "very ignorant and very wicked"; but she could not help seeing the change that had come over Ko Tha Byu, the "diabolical temper" that had become a gentle patience, the unheeding ignorance that had been transformed into a passionate desire to know more of the things of Christ—and this, with the winsomeness of Sarah Boardman, drew her in spite of herself. She came into a real experience of Christ, and on March 10, 1829, was baptized.

Not all of Boardman's hearers were ignorant and illiterate. One day as he was talking with a group of people a man contemptuously said: "You know but very little. You ought to read more of our books. Make yourself acquainted with our sacred writings, then you would know something."

Boardman courteously agreed, and said that while he knew but little of the books mentioned, he was trying every day to add to his knowledge.

"Yes, yes," said the man impatiently; "you have read such and such books"—those which he had heard George say that he had read—"but the matter is not clearly stated in them. I want you

to read such and such books; then you will not condemn what you do not know."

George had difficulty in controlling his temper, for he knew that while he himself was making every effort to become acquainted with the literature of which the man spoke, his critic was making no effort at all to learn anything of Christian truth. He replied that he would certainly read the books recommended, but that from such reading as he had already done he knew at least a few of the things that his critic and all the Burmans believed: that their god was a sinner, that he died, that he was annihilated, and that, of course, he could do nothing. The man admitted this, but persisted in his demand that George read more of the books, and "come to the light."

Again George agreed, and then asked, "Have you read any of *our* books?" Answered in the negative, he gave the man a tract; but the man read only a few words, threw down the tract, and haughtily walked off—taking the rest of the listeners with him. It was a discouraging moment for George.

Some days later, a Sunday afternoon, he was again teaching in the little *zayat*, with about forty people gathered around listening, when his

"high-spirited friend" again appeared, and before the whole company repeated nearly the same things about his sacred books. George was prepared for him this time, however, answered him calmly, and the man became quiet.

While George Boardman had now been less than three years in India and Burma, his experiences and responsibilities had matured and ripened his character and emphasized his decisiveness. He had learned to think through problems carefully, make his decisions, and then act upon them. When once satisfied that a course of action was his duty, no discouragements or obstacles could swerve him from his purpose. He was somewhat reserved, and not inclined to express an opinion unless pressed for it, but he was a clear and logical thinker and delighted in hard, concentrated mental effort. He was a thorough believer in education, and felt that a most important part of his task in laying the foundations for missionary work in Tavoy was the establishment of schools that would emancipate the minds of the converts and break the shackles of superstition and ignorance.

Not long after they arrived in Tavoy, therefore, he opened a boys' day-school, "for the English and Burman languages and the more

familiar and useful sciences." The school had the approval of A. D. Maingay, Civil Commissioner for the provinces, who was much interested in native schools and authorized Boardman to draw on him monthly for "fifty Madras rupees" for the school in Tavoy. About a month later—September 29, 1828—George submitted to the Board in America a comprehensive plan for the establishment of schools for boys throughout the Tavoy district; with the statement that Mrs. Boardman was anxious, as soon as opportunity afforded, to begin a similar work for the education of girls. At the meeting of the Baptist General Convention in Philadelphia, April 29, 1829, his plan was studied, and the Committee reported:

"The plan submitted by Mr. Boardman for the establishment of native schools is wise and judicious. . . . We, therefore, earnestly recommend the adoption of the plan, as far as may be compatible with the means at hand."

Thus, from the very beginning, the Boardmans stressed education, a policy that has borne rich fruit in the excellent schools that the Christian Karens have continued to maintain.

Not only were schools established, but there was also, of course, a little church; and in order

to be nearer the people, the Boardmans had moved into another house (January 2, 1829). A son, George Dana, Junior, had been born to them in August, 1828, and with the care of Baby George and little Sarah, and the responsibilities that she carried in the work of the Mission, Sarah's days were more than full.

Thus far, George's work in the city had been largely with the Burmese; but Ko Tha Byu's ministry was so productive of an increasing and widespread interest on the part of the Karens that his attention was more and more directed to them.

As has been intimated, the Karens' own traditions had remarkably prepared them for the acceptance of Christianity. Traces of three distinct religious conceptions were found among them. The most primitive thought only of an impersonal power residing in men and things, conquerable only by some more powerful manifestation of itself in another object. Many other Karens were animists, regarding all things about them as spirits with distinct personalities. Still others knew the "Y'wa" legend, very much like the early chapters of Genesis, with its account of the placing of the first parents in the garden by "Y'wa," the Creator, their temptation

to eat of the forbidden fruit by a serpent or dragon, etc. This legend was accompanied by a prophecy of the return of the white brother with the Lost Book.

It was this legend of the Lost Book that prepared them for the Bible and Christian teachers, and, in turn, led to the amazing development of Christianity among the Karens—one of the outstanding achievements of the missionary enterprise. Dr. Marshall gives the following account of this legend:

“In the beginning ‘Y’wa’ had seven sons; the eldest was the Karen, and the youngest the white man. The father, being about to go on a journey, invited the Karen to accompany him; but the latter declined on the score that he had his field to clear. The Burman also refused to go. However, each of them gave ‘Y’wa’ a gift. .... The white brother was induced to accompany his father .... (and when) they .... reached the celestial shore .... ‘Y’wa’ prepared three books: one of silver and gold for the Karen, because he was the oldest; one of palm-leaf for the Burman, and one of parchment for their white brother. These were given to the white man, and he accepted them, but kept the silver and gold book himself, sending the parchment book to the Karen by the hands of the Burman. The Karen was busy clearing his fields and, paying little attention to the book, forgot to carry it home. When he burned off his clearing, it was

lying on a stump and was nearly destroyed. The pigs and chickens ate the charred remains of it."<sup>1</sup>

A tradition arose that one day the long-absent white brother would return to them from across the waters bringing the lost book—which they looked for with unabated expectation.

Not long after the Boardmans came to Tavoy, they began to hear of a Karen teacher (he was really more of a sorcerer) who possessed a sacred book. One evening in September (1828) George returned to his home to find it thronged with Karen, who told him that the Karen teacher had arrived with the much-venerated book. When Boardman made further inquiries about it, the teacher said:

"My lord, your humble servants have come from the wilderness to lay at your lordship's feet a certain book, and to inquire of your lordship whether it is good or bad, true or false. We, Karen, your humble servants, are an ignorant race of people; we have no books, no written language, we know nothing of God or his law. When this book was given us we were charged to worship it, which we have done for twelve years. But we knew nothing of its contents, not so much as in what language it is written. We

<sup>1</sup> H. L. Marshall, *The Karen People of Burma*, pp. 279, 280.

have heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and are persuaded of its truth, and we wish to know if this book contains the doctrine of that gospel. We are persuaded that your lordship can easily settle the question, and teach us the true way of becoming happy."

Boardman asked to see the book. The man opened a large basket, removed fold after fold of wrappers, and handed him an old, tattered volume which proved to be the *Book of Common Prayer with the Psalms*, published at Oxford, England.

"It is a good book," said Boardman to the teacher, "but it is not good to worship it. You must worship the God it reveals." And he proceeded to spend the evening telling the simple people something of the first principles of the Christian gospel. Though at first they were somewhat disappointed to learn that they had been worshiping the book in vain, the people—especially a chieftain named Moung So—were interested in what the missionary had to tell them; a number of them accepted his message as the fulfilment of their own prophecies, and in time became Christians.

Some years later (1833), when Christianity had spread among the Karens to such an extent

that the Burmese authorities began to fear it and to persecute Karen Christians, one of the Karens caught and imprisoned was Ko Shwe Waing, an influential young chief of Bassein. Through the good offices of the English Resident<sup>2</sup> he was released, and succeeded in carrying with him to his home a number of religious books. He traveled as secretly as possible and when he finally reached home hid the books in a bundle of old clothes. Then, late at night, by twos and threes, men and women crept to the house. Dr. Marshall thus describes the scene:

"Guards were posted outside of the village, and the bundle was brought out and unwrapped, until by the dim light of a wick burning in an earthen cup filled with oil, the books were disclosed, including a Bible that was regarded as the now recovered Lost Book. At the sight of this unspeakable treasure some of those present bowed down and worshiped, others wept, some touched and caressed the sacred book, some kissed it, and some gazed long and curiously at its title. They crowded around the volume so thickly that the chief lifted it high above his head in order that all might see, and all gazed at it with bated breath. They had been permitted to witness the return of their book, and they believed that they were no longer to be members of a despised nation."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "Resident" is the title of certain important British officials in India and Burma.

<sup>3</sup> H. I. Marshall, *The Karen People of Burma*, pp. 297, 298.

This, then, was the body of tradition that so marvelously prepared the Karens for the preaching of Ko Tha Byu. Under the influence of that preaching they began to press into Tavoy to see the white teacher.

Toward the close of January, 1829, two Karens, who had traveled a number of days' journey—one of them from Mergui—came to Tavoy and informed Boardman that the Karens in the Tavoy, Mergui and Tenasserim districts had heard of him and were eager to receive his message and instruction. George could not resist their earnest pleas. Months earlier he had written friends at home:

"If my health should be spared, I intend after the rains to visit the Karens at their own villages. This will be a fatiguing undertaking, but Providence seems to call me to engage in it. May my going to them be like Brainerd's going to the Indians (in America). I mention Brainerd because I am now reading his *Memoirs*, and because the Indians of America and the Karens of this country are somewhat alike in their wild habits."

Soon Boardman, with Ko Tha Byu and two of the larger schoolboys, set out on an extended tour, or visit, among the Karen villages.

The trip was typical of many, many more in the succeeding months. The party took its way

through the rice fields, over high mountains, to the isolated Karen villages that were usually built high on the mountain side or back in the jungle. The road was little more than a narrow, winding footpath, with long stretches where the tropical sun beat down upon them. To add to their discomfort, in the middle of the afternoon they were overtaken by a heavy rainstorm—most unseasonable, for this was the “dry season” of the year—and they were soaked to the skin. Fortunately, the books and papers that George had taken with him on the journey—a Bible, Brainerd’s *Memoirs*, and some portions of Scripture—were unharmed. After traveling for another three hours they encamped for the night, when they were again overtaken by a rainstorm. As there was no house or shelter to be seen, they were obliged to camp in the open, exposed to the full fury of the storm. They covered their books and extra clothing with piles of leaves, and huddled around their little fire. They prayed together, and then tried to get some rest. It was not until midnight that the rain ceased, the stars came out, and the little party were at last able to sleep.

Next day they were up early for another journey over the mountains. About four in the

afternoon they came to a little Karen village where the people were most kind and hospitable. Boardman writes: "Our hosts set before us a good plate of rice, on which we fed with thankful hearts. They gave up their own rooms to us, spread a mat for my bed and a bamboo for my pillow. After worship, in which our hosts united with us, we lay down and slept. Seldom, if ever, have I been so fatigued."

Everywhere they went they found a most cordial welcome. The people helped carry their baggage and provided them with food of all sorts. One of the villages visited was Tshick-kar, where lived the chieftain, Moung So, who had been present when the old sorcerer had visited Tavoy some months earlier and shown his sacred book. Boardman writes that in Tshick-kar the people's "countenances beamed with joy at seeing us, and they said, 'Ah, you have come at last; we have long been wishing to see you.'" A *sayat* had been built for them, large enough for sixty or seventy persons, and the people were kindness itself in bringing them food and making every possible provision for their comfort. Moung So himself was ill with fever, but he came over to the *sayat* and stayed there day and night that he might not miss a word of the preaching.

Some idea of their strenuous program on this and many similar tours through the jungle, may be gained from an account of the activities of the Sunday they spent in Tshick-kar. Early in the morning people of all ages, a group of about fifty, came with gifts. After breakfast, Boardman preached and when he had finished speaking Ko Tha Byu interpreted the sermon in Karen. George had not at this time mastered the Karen language, and so it was his custom to preach to the people in Burmese; then Ko Tha Byu first interpreted the sermon in Karen, and then himself preached in Karen. At noon, Boardman preached again—"about fifty persons were present, and the attention was better than in the morning." In the evening he preached a third time to the usual congregation—"the people paid respectful attention and seemed unwilling to leave the place." Utterly weary, he was about to go to bed, when five persons came forward to say that they believed in Christ and wished to be baptized.

And so it went, in village after village, as the tour was continued. One of those who requested baptism on this trip was a man who had heard the gospel repeatedly from Ko Tha Byu. In his case, as with the others who made similar re-

quests, Boardman advised that the ordinance be deferred for the present.

The weather continued to be unseasonable—every night it rained, and more than once the little party and their baggage were drenched. In all they had traveled more than a hundred miles—over burning stretches of plain, through the dense jungle, fording swift rivers, and climbing the steep and rugged mountain paths. They had been gone nine days, and George had preached seventeen times to most interested groups of Karens. Tired though he was after the hard journey, he felt that he could almost run when they came in sight of Tavoy. Then he was actually at the house, bathed and refreshed after the days in the jungle. The children were well and happy, and Sarah was smiling at him across the tea-table as he told her the great news of the responsiveness of the Karens. It was good to be home.

It was fortunate that the response among the Karens had been so hopeful, for the work in Tavoy itself at this time went through a period of discouragement. Some of the Burmese whom Boardman had earlier baptized and on whom he had counted, proved unfaithful, and fell away from the Christian fellowship. Ko Tha Byu,

however, continued his remarkable work among the Karens. Soon after this trip with George, he was off again for another long journey, of seven weeks, to the border of Siam; and he continued to report increasing and promising interest on the part of the Karens.



7

"IF I MUST NEEDS GLORY"



## "IF I MUST NEEDS GLORY"

Though the work at Tavoy had not been without its hardships and heartaches, yet thus far the Boardmans had not been exposed to personal danger. Early one Sunday morning, however, in August, 1829, they were awakened by the terrifying cry, "Teacher! Master! Tavoy rebels!" and the sound of guns. Soon bullets were whistling over their heads, some of which struck the house. In a few moments a large company of Tavoyans had collected near the gate of their home and seemed to be debating what to do with them. George caught up the baby, and he and Sarah, with a few others of the household, managed to get out the back door and into another building in the rear of the house. Here, with a Burmese boy on the watch, they waited for an hour in the greatest anxiety and uncertainty. Then the Sepoys came and soon were in possession of the city gate, which was just in front of the Boardman house.

Major Burney, Commander of the troops in Tavoy, had gone to Moulmein, and in his absence

the Tavoyans revolted. Some 250 men had attacked the powder magazine and gun shed, very near the Boardman home, but a guard of six Sepoys under a native officer had been able to repulse them. Next, a second party of sixty attacked the house of the principal native officer of the town, while a third party fell upon the guard at the prison and let loose the hundred prisoners confined there. These prisoners, as soon as their irons were knocked off, became the most daring of all the insurgents. The town was in an uproar. For the moment, our missionary family seemed safe, but there was no telling when the attack might be renewed. Such rebels as had been captured insisted that the whole Tavoy District was engaged in the rebellion, that large reinforcements for the rebels might be expected at any moment, and that although the Sepoys had possession of the city gates, the insurgents were surrounding the wall on every side. Soon several hundred rebels could be seen coming along the road. There was no time to lose, for the Boardman house was directly in the range of the rebels' firing. George called his little household together for prayer, and decided that he had no recourse but to accept the invitation of Mrs. Burney, wife of the Commander of

the Troops, to come to Government House. George and Sarah caught up such of their possessions as they could carry with them and with the native Christians fled for their lives. His family safe in Government House, George more than once dashed back to the house to try to rescue some more of their belongings. He could not carry much at a time, for he had to be prepared to run for his life; but perhaps he could save his papers and some of his precious books; or pack up more of their small supply of extra clothing, and some of the little things that helped to make more comfortable this life in a tropical climate. But the firing came closer and closer, and the last time he got to the house he found that the rebels had already broken in, and the books, furniture, and clothing he had not been able to save on previous trips had been stolen, badly damaged, or completely destroyed.

By this time Government House itself had become unsafe, and it was agreed that the town must be evacuated. The Europeans and Sepoys retired to the wharf, on which stood a large wooden building of six rooms. Into this they were all huddled, besides several hundred women and children, Portuguese and others, who looked to the English for protection. This building was

hardly an ideal place of refuge, for in one of the rooms, where many had to sleep, and which the defenders were continually passing, were several hundred barrels of gunpowder. Then, too, the building was so exposed that a sudden rush from the rebels would result in the massacre of all. Attempts were made to secure help from Moulmein and Mergui, but the messages sent never reached their destination.

It was the rainy season and the dampness of the wharf-building soon began to affect the health of the soldiers. There was but a small supply of rice, in a granary near the wharf, and that was in real danger of being spoiled by the dampness or destroyed by fire. On the morning of the thirteenth, a little before daybreak, a party of some five hundred rebels made a sortie from the town, set fire to several houses and ships near the wharf, and it seemed only a question of moments before the fire would reach the wharf building. Suddenly, there was a terrific rain-storm, the menacing flames were extinguished, and the soldiers, greatly heartened, repelled their assailants.

Not long afterward, what was the joy of all to see a ship coming up the river! It was the "Diana," bringing Major Burney back to Tavoy.

What a welcome he received from the anxious and worn defenders at the wharf! A council was held at once, and it was agreed that the "Diana" should return to Moulmein immediately for reinforcements of troops. Major Burney urged that the Boardmans accompany Mrs. Burney back to Moulmein in the "Diana." George was most grateful for this opportunity to send his little family to a place of safety, but reluctant as he was to be separated from them, he felt that his own duty called him to remain in Tavoy. His knowledge of the language made him useful as an interpreter, and there was always the chance that he might be of some help in negotiations with the rebels, negotiations that possibly would prevent further bloodshed. And so he breathed a prayer for his family's safety and watched them sail away in the *Diana*. Then he turned to see what he could do to help the defenders.

On Saturday, the fifteenth, a consultation was held. The defenders were weak and small in numbers, but some kind of offensive seemed the best tactics; and so it was decided to attack the town, in the hope of capturing the rebel guns that constantly menaced the wharf-building. The attack was carried out and was successful. The

guns were captured and soon taken to the wharf. Emboldened by this success, the defenders renewed the attack, released those of their comrades who had been captured, and chased the rebels out of Tavoy.

What a scene of destruction greeted their eyes throughout the city! Everything that could not be carried off had been hacked or destroyed, in the most wanton manner. The Boardman house and *sayat* had been used as barracks and cook-house; much of the furniture had been stolen and the remainder badly damaged or broken into pieces; worst of all, their books had been scattered, torn and destroyed. George spent days in trying to collect scattered pieces of furniture, having the house cleaned and repaired, and trying to mend such of his books as he could find.

The Karens, of course, had retreated to the jungle with the outbreak of hostilities, and, for the moment, there seemed little that Boardman could do in Tavoy. He therefore went to Moulmein for a brief visit with his family. What a relief it was, after the long months of comparative isolation in Tavoy, to find himself once more in the company of his loved ones, of the missionaries, and the other Christians of Moul-

mein! There was so much to be told, there were new converts to meet, friendships with Burmese Christians to be renewed, and the joy of sharing in the Sunday services in the Moulmein church. Truly, this was a welcome change from the scenes he had left behind in Tavoy.

But his heart was in Tavoy, and the people there needed him. After a week in Moulmein, he felt that he must return. For the time being, all agreed that Mrs. Boardman should remain in Moulmein until it could be determined whether the work in Tavoy might be resumed, and until George saw that the house there was once more fit to live in. So George went on to Tavoy alone. He spent the month of September completing the repair of the mission house, and re-establishing the work so rudely interrupted by the insurrection. By the end of the month it seemed feasible to have the family join him, and so once more he went to Moulmein to bring them home. On the fourth of October they set sail for Tavoy, once more in the "Diana," and again when the ship anchored at Amherst George and Sarah visited the graves of Ann Judson and little Maria. This time they determined that something should be done to protect the spot, hallowed by the memory of Ann's devotion and sacrifices,

from the heedlessness and negligence of the passerby; so George arranged with one of the residents of Amherst to erect a small mound of bricks over the graves, that the spot might not be entirely forgotten. Some time later, the gifts of American women, glad to do homage to the dauntless spirit and Christian devotion of Ann Hasseltine Judson, enabled the Board of the Foreign Mission Society to erect a simple monument at her grave.

Soon the Boardmans were on their way again, and at seven o'clock the next morning, October 7, they arrived in Tavoy. The work there was resumed and they were happy to find the number of inquirers increasing. The Karens had been greatly concerned about Boardman, and as soon as they learned that he was safely back in Tavoy they came in large numbers to welcome him. Three of those who came—one a man sixty-five years of age—came to ask baptism. Boardman writes:

"Is it not a pleasing proof of the power of the Gospel on the heart, that these persons, uninduced by any earthly prospects, should, in their old age, have given up the customs of their ancestors, and that they should, decrepit as they are, traverse mountains and rocks and hills and streams, a distance of fifty miles, to receive Christian baptism?"

The preaching tours were resumed, and George visited the villages surrounding Tavoy and ultimately those at a greater distance. He bought a boat, and was thus able to tour villages accessible only from the river. On these river tours Ko Tha Byu did not accompany him, but while Boardman was making a river tour Ko Tha Byu would tour elsewhere. He even planned a trip across the Siamese frontier. Repeated requests came from villages, asking that Boardman visit them, and when he was unable to go himself, he sent Ko Tha Byu, who was received with great cordiality. The school in Tavoy, supported by gifts from America, and the day school, supported by a monthly allowance from the Government, continued with growing enrolments. Though ill health had compelled Sarah early in 1829 to give up the girls' boarding school, established the year before, she continued to supervise some girls' day schools taught by native women. The church in Tavoy, which at one time had had only two faithful members, had grown to ten native Christians; and ten others, of whom five were Karens, had applied for baptism.

The work was rendered the more difficult by frequent illness in the Boardman family. There

was no European woman within 150 miles, and when there was illness, there was no one to whom they could turn for help. In July, less than a month before the Tavoy rebellion, the little daughter had been taken ill, and after lingering for a couple of weeks, died. Then baby George took ill, and for a time there seemed little hope of his life. Dr. Price, the American missionary doctor who had been Judson's fellow-prisoner at Ava, had died. The Boardmans, at the request of his executors, had adopted as their own Dr. Price's two orphan sons, and this increased their family responsibilities. Toward the end of 1829 another son was born to the Boardmans, Judson Wade, and shortly after his birth Sarah became seriously ill—indeed, her life was despaired of—and George was the only one to care for her. For the time being he had to give up practically all his missionary activities, for he scarcely dared to leave Sarah for more than a few minutes. Fortunately, she recovered, but the doctor urged that she take a little rest at the seashore, and the family accordingly spent about two weeks in a bungalow at the seaside, some ten miles from the town. George himself mentions a "cough of several months' continuance," warning of a more

serious state of health than he cared to admit. Writing to a friend about his work, he said, "I will set down one-quarter of our time to the score of interruption from direct missionary work, occasioned by the illness of myself or some of my family."

He drove himself harder to make up for lost time, and despite these interruptions, the work went on. For all George's love of books and study, he gave himself with the driving energy of his intense nature to the work of preaching. He was rigorous with himself in planning to use his time to the best advantage. He spent about half of his time in village preaching. Sometimes he would leave home early in the morning, visit a village or two, possibly some three or four miles from Tavoy, where he would preach from house to house, or in some *sayat*, or other public place, and return home that evening; and next morning repeat the program in some other village. Or he would leave Tavoy on a Monday morning and spend the week in traveling over dusty, burning plains, visiting successive villages and preaching to the people, and return home Saturday night. Often he visited the Buddhist monasteries in the towns and along the way, to converse with the Buddhist priests. During his absence, Sarah had

all the work and all the responsibility of the station.

From time to time he took longer trips out to the Karen villages. These settlements were at a greater distance from town, and accessible only by hard roads, over mountains, rocks and streams, and through jungles haunted by wild animals. Difficult and dangerous as were these journeys—wearing in the extreme and requiring prolonged absence from his loved family—this was the ministry closest to his heart, for the Karen seemed so responsive and so eager to hear his message.

As a constant responsibility, he had the supervision of the schools in the town. Again, he would sit in the wayside *sayat* in Tavoy and talk with all who would come to him there. Wherever he went, he distributed literature. One of his practices was to copy out choice extracts from the Burmese Bible—enough to fill a page or two—and write at the bottom of the page: "*The missionary who lives outside the north gate of the city of Tavoy extracted this passage from the great Scriptures.*" These pages he would give to those who would read a page but would not take a book or longer tract. The leaflet so given out brought to the people some Christian

truth and also informed them about the missionary, and his place of residence where they might talk with him personally. When he was at home, he had talks with his schoolboys, prepared lessons, continued the study of the language, and conversed with the many visitors who came to see him. Truly, "in labors more abundant," were both George and Sarah Boardman. Early in March, 1830, it seemed wise for Sarah to go to Moulmein for an extended visit. The missionaries there, concerned over her ill-health, had urged that a stay in Moulmein might prove beneficial. Then, too, the Moulmein missionaries, the Wades, were going to Rangoon to attempt to rebuild the work there, and it was hoped that Sarah might be able to give some supervision to the work for women and girls in Moulmein, for without such help, and in the absence of Mrs. Wade, no woman missionary would be available to care for this important branch of the work. For a time, then, George carried on alone in Tavoy.

In the meantime, Judson and Wade were pressing forward in Rangoon and Prome, and finding their efforts apparently successful. Hence they came to the conclusion that they should remain there rather than go back to

Moulmein, and they asked Boardman to return to Moulmein. Reluctant as he was to leave a promising work among his loved Karens, in deference to the request, George went to Moulmein. It seemed at first that the transfer might be a permanent one, and it was with real sorrow that the Karens heard of the proposed departure. They came to the house to bid him farewell but could hardly speak for their grief at his going. The little company had prayer together, and then a communion service. Boardman promised that if he found that he could visit Tavoy after the rains, he would meet them halfway, at a place where they promised to build a *sayat* and bring the people; and this cheered them somewhat. On April 27 he left Tavoy, reaching Moulmein May 3. During a residence in Tavoy of two years, Boardman had collected a native church of twenty, fifteen of whom were Karens.

Ko Tha Byu and Moung Shway-Bwen, with their wives, the two baptized Indo-Chinese and several from the boys' school accompanied them to Moulmein.

Both George and Sarah were far from well. Writing from Moulmein early in July, 1830, George said that Sarah had had another attack of illness; but was then somewhat better. His

own health had been impaired ever since the hardships he suffered during the insurrection at Tavoy, the previous year. He had an uninterrupted cough, sometimes so violent that he could obtain relief only by lying down for an hour or so, and the doctors now told him that his lungs were affected, and that there was no cure.

Despite illness, they continued in Moulmein a heavy schedule of work. On Sundays, George preached three sermons—two in English and one in Burmese—and attended a Burmese catechetical recitation, somewhat like a Bible class. On Fridays he preached in English. Every other evening in the week he attended a prayer meeting or experience meeting, or delivered a lecture or exposition in Burmese. During the day, he corrected proof sheets for the press and the writing of two Burmese copyists; talked with people who came to see him; prepared lessons for the boys' school, and superintended the erection of a new house—for the old mission house had fallen into disrepair.

Mrs. Boardman was equally busy. Two new missionaries, the Bennetts, had come out from America to re-enforce the small company in Burma. Mr. Bennett was a printer and gave himself largely to the affairs of the press. Mrs.

Bennett assisted Mrs. Boardman in the conduct of the boys' boarding-school. Ko Tha Byu continued his touring from Moulmein as he had formerly done from Tavoy, distributing tracts and preaching everywhere; and again he found the Karens most responsive.

George's health grew steadily worse, and by the third week in July the doctor insisted that he give up all his heavier duties—such as speaking, reading aloud, intense study—put him on the diet of a tubercular patient, and advised that he move to a better climate; and, if possible, take a sea voyage—preferably returning to America. This last he would not consent to do; but such rest as he took proved beneficial, and there seemed some little improvement in his health. In November, the Wades returned to Moulmein, and as the Bennetts had now grown more experienced in mission work and were to have the help of the Wades, it was decided that the Boardmans might return to Tavoy. So late in November they once more sailed for Tavoy, to resume work there and to prepare the way for the new missionaries whom they expected would soon join them on that field.

The Boardmans had been through two very hard years. The death of little Sarah in July

of 1829 had been a sad blow for them. She was nearly three years old, a lovely child, and both George and Sarah missed her sorely. Then had come the Tavoy rebellion, and all the hardships that it entailed. There had been months when George or Sarah or both of them had been ill; more than once seriously ill. Then, early in September of 1830, their baby son, Judson Wade, who had never been strong, died; and was buried at Moulmein. As George wrote his brother-in-law in November of 1830:

"For two years past, few have been the days in which some sore affliction, sickness, pain, trial, or death has not been pressing upon us, to drink up our spirits." Yet with it all, such was his devotion that he could also write:

"If you ask whether, under these circumstances, I regret having come to Burma, I promptly answer, No. Do you inquire if I think Burma has proved unfavorable to my health? I answer, No. Had I remained in America I should probably have been in my grave before now. But even supposing Burma had proved unfavorable to my health, or that of my companion, are the Burmans to be left to ruin because *health* will be impaired, or life *shortened*, by our coming hither? To spread the Gospel through Burma is worth a thousand lives."



**“GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN”**



## "GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN"

Early in December they were once more back in their beloved Tavoy. Ko Tha Byu, of course, returned with them, and almost immediately set out upon a tour to tell the Karens the joyful news that their teacher was back. A stream of visitors began to arrive at the home in Tavoy, many of them bringing gifts. It was heartening to the Boardmans to find that the foundations they had laid had stood the test. The work among the Karens had gone steadily forward, and not one of the native Christians had fallen away from his faith in Christ.

George's disease made rapid progress, and he was not able to accompany Ko Tha Byu on his tours; but he continued to receive those who came to see him, and spent long hours in the examination of candidates who wished to be baptized. He writes, about the middle of December: "Ko Tha Byu has returned from the Karen settlements, bringing about forty of his countrymen with him. Among them are a large number who wish to be baptized." And later:

"Finished the examination, which has lasted above three whole days and evenings. Eighteen Karens, five of whom were women, have been accepted, and were this day baptized by our ordained brother, Moung Ing." By the end of the month, he was writing:

"In the course of the month, I have distributed four hundred and sixty tracts and portions of Scripture in Burman, and eight or ten portions of Scripture in Malabar, thirty or forty in Chinese, besides a few English books and tracts. My health being on the whole somewhat improved since our arrival at Tavoy, I feel some hope to be able soon to do a little missionary work, if not to teach and preach daily, as I formerly did."

This hope of restored health was doomed to disappointment. Early in 1831 it became apparent that George Boardman had not long to live. For some time his letters to his friends at home had made it plain that he recognized that he must have help to carry on the work at Tavoy, and he had urged the Board to make some provision for this. Now he asked himself, Would he live until the new missionary arrived? As he thought over his missionary service, it seemed such a brief time that he had been on the field—after those years of preparation. How few, comparatively, he had been able to reach

with the gospel message. And now the Karens were so responsive—it was hard to think of letting go. Yet there was Ko Tha Byu to carry on, and the foundations had been well and truly laid. To leave little George and his loved Sarah—ah, that was harder yet! Sarah was not strong; could she carry on without him? And she would be lonely. If he could somehow know that she would be cared for! Yet he knew—and Sarah knew—that the Master they had served so faithfully would be with her; and in that thought they found comfort and peace.

Some time since George had definitely written the Board urging that not only the enfeebled condition of his health, but more especially the great opportunity among the Karens and Burmese in Moulmein and Tavoy, called for immediate re-enforcements of missionaries. He pointed out that both in the British Provinces and in Burma proper, there was reason to believe that the work would go forward if only there could be a larger missionary staff. The Board recognized the justice of his requests, and sent Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Kincaid and Mr. and Mrs. Francis Mason as missionaries to Burma, with the understanding that the Masons would be stationed at Tavoy.

On January 23, 1831, Mr. Mason landed at Tavoy. By this time, Boardman was so weak that he could not walk to the wharf to meet the newcomer; but in his fine Christian courtesy, and characteristic desire to do everything possible to welcome the new arrival, he had himself brought in a chair to the jetty, that he might greet Mr. Mason as he landed.

In the spring of 1830, when Boardman had been called to Moulmein to take charge of the work there during the absence of the missionaries, Judson and Wade, he had promised the Karens that he would return to Tavoy and once more visit them in their villages. Since his return to Tavoy, the Karens had not ceased to remind him of his promise, urging him again and again to come to their villages, where many were seeking baptism. They told him of the *sayat* that they had built near the foot of one of the mountains, where he had visited them before. He was now so feeble that it seemed humanly impossible for him to make the journey, but the Karens offered to carry him all the way if he would only come. Sarah feared for the effect of the long journey; but finally, in the hope that the change of air and scenery would prove beneficial, she gave her consent. All knew that the journey

was likely to be his last; but George was so eager to go that Sarah and Mr. Mason did not have the heart to dissuade him.

On January 31 they set out. At first it was thought that Sarah should not go; but when the morning set for the journey actually came, she was so reluctant to have him go without her that she and Baby George joined the party. George lay on a cot; and for all of that long, tiring, three days' journey, over narrow, rocky mountain paths, the Karens tenderly carried their loved leader. At last they reached their destination. They found that the Karens had built a bamboo chapel beside a beautiful stream at the base of a range of mountains. In the chapel, rooms had been partitioned off for the use of the visitors, and here Sarah made her husband as comfortable as possible. Though the journey had been exhausting, yet the beautiful surroundings, and the fact that so many Karens—nearly a hundred—were awaiting him, trying in every way possible to show their love for him, eager to hear more of the gospel message and to follow their Master in baptism—thrilled and enheartened him, and for a time Sarah hoped that a few days' stay would prove really beneficial.

The hope was of short duration. George became worse. It was evident that he could not live long. Sarah urged that they return to Tavoy, where he could have the quietness of home and the help of a doctor. But her husband would not consent. "Don't ask me to go," he pleaded, "till these poor Karens have been baptized." It was hard to see him suffering thus, away from home, with none of the little comforts that an invalid should have; but Sarah could not refuse him, and they agreed to stay a while longer.

By Wednesday (February 10) it became apparent that the end was near, and he was again urged to return immediately to Tavoy. He finally consented, upon condition that they examine the women and older men and baptize them that evening; then he would be willing to return the following day.

The chapel was large, but it was open on all sides, except for the small place built up for Mr. Mason and a room—about five feet wide and ten feet long—for the Boardmans. The roof was so low that they could not stand upright, and the tiny room so poorly enclosed that the sufferer was exposed to the tropical sun by day and the cold winds and damp fog by night. But he was

at peace, and more than once said: "If I live to see this one ingathering, I may well exclaim, with happy Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' How many ministers have wished they might die in their pulpits; and would not dying in a spot like this be even more blessed than dying in a pulpit, at home?"

A little before sunset on Wednesday his cot was carried out to the side of the stream, and with Boardman looking on, Mr. Mason baptized thirty-four people. The joy of the occasion was almost too much for him. He seemed to feel now that his lifework was finished.

Early the next morning they prepared to return to Tavoy. Again George had to be carried. A number of the Karen's accompanied them. Late in the afternoon the party was overtaken by a severe thunderstorm. There was no shelter in sight, and the rain beat down upon them. Despite all that they could do to protect the dying man, his mattress and pillows were soon drenched. There was nothing for it but to push on. Finally, they reached a Tavoyan's house; but here they were refused admittance, for the occupants knew the sick man to be a teacher of

a foreign religion and the Karens with him to be his followers.

"Perhaps they will let us stay over in that shed," said Sarah, and ran to see whether it had room for George's cot. Alas! the shed proved to be the "house of their gods," and Sarah had committed an almost unpardonable offense in venturing inside. Something must be done, for night was coming on. "Isn't there some little place where we may stay?" pleaded Sarah.

"Only here on the verandah," grudgingly replied the Tavoyan.

"But the teacher is very sick, and the night air is damp and chill. May not just he come inside for the night?" and her eyes filled with tears, as she begged this tiny comfort for her sick husband.

"No, no; he can stay outside with the rest. We have no room for him here." And the door was barred against them.

Sarah found a place where Baby George could sleep without danger of falling through one of the openings in the bamboo floor. Then, as George's cot was soaked, the Karens helped her spread mats for him on the floor. How she longed to have him in his comfortable bed at home! Here there was little enough that she

could do for him. She gave him some cold water to relieve the discomfort of his mouth and throat, and he smiled up at her: "You must not worry, Sarah. I am suffering nothing to what you endured last year when I thought I must lose you. And you are taking such good care of me."

"But if only we were home, and I could nurse you as I wish," said Sarah.

"All I want is my wife and friends," replied George. "Comforts mean little to one so near heaven. I only want them for your sake."

Day came at last, February 11, 1831, and with it George seemed slightly better. They found that if they waited until noon, most of the journey could be made by water, and as this would be easier for the dying man, it was decided to defer the departure until then. George became more and more feeble as the morning wore on, and more than once Sarah thought that his last moment had come. To add to their discomfort, the Tavoyan scowled at them continually; and though he said little, it was only too plain that he wanted to be rid of them.

Sarah thought that a little broth might help her husband, and she timidly begged for one of the chickens that she could see under the house.

"No, we have none at all," said the Tavoyan and turned away.

Finally, the boat came, and docked a few feet from the house. The Karens tenderly carried George to it, and then, as the shore was very muddy, they returned for Sarah. It was no time at all before she was with him, but in that brief interval the change had come. He was sinking fast. She called the faithful Karens to stand beside him during his last moments, and brought little George to see his father once more. But the end had come, and in a few minutes he was no more.

They went in silence down the river, and landed about three miles from their home. The sad news had preceded them, and as they made their way to town they were met by Moung Ing, the Burmese preacher, and then by others, and when they reached the house by still more who had come to mourn him. The funeral was held the next morning, and George Dana Boardman was laid to rest beside little Sarah. Adoniram Judson, writing in his journal, says:

"One of the brightest luminaries of Burma is extinguished—dear brother Boardman is gone to his eternal rest. He fell gloriously at the head of his troops in the arms of victory. Disabled by wounds, he was obliged

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*"Greater Love Hath No Man"*

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through the whole of his last expedition to be carried on a litter; but his presence was a host, and the Holy Spirit accompanied his dying whispers with Almighty influence. Such a death, next to that of martyrdom, must be glorious in the eyes of Heaven. Well may we rest assured that a triumphal crown awaits him on the great day, and 'Well done, good and faithful Boardman, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' "



MRS. BOARDMAN CARRIES ON



## MRS. BOARDMAN CARRIES ON

A difficult problem now faced Sarah Boardman: Should she return to America with little George, or try to continue her husband's work alone, there in Burma? She thought and prayed about this long and earnestly, for it was a hard decision to make. She finally decided to write her missionary friends in Moulmein and Rangoon for their advice and counsel, and was just about to send the letters when she received a most understanding letter from Dr. Judson. Out of his own suffering, in the death of his loved Ann, he sent words of comfort to Sarah Boardman. He knew the loneliness that she was experiencing, and could tell her how he himself had found peace. And more, he could imagine her concern for little George, her anxiety as to what might become of him if anything happened to her in this strange land. While he knew that she could not bear to part from him just then, he offered, if and when she did decide to send him home, to make every effort on his behalf in securing his education. And if anything should

happen to Sarah herself, he stood ready to adopt George as his own son, and to provide for him and watch over him as long as he lived. What a relief that letter was, and how much comfort and assurance it brought to Sarah! Whatever happened now, George would be cared for—she could be sure of that. In the years that followed, Adoniram Judson more than made good his word. He had a real affection for the lad and was indeed a second father to him.

There remained the question of her own future. She herself writes of the way in which she came to her decision:

"When I first stood by the grave of my husband, I thought that I must go home with George. But these poor, inquiring and Christian Karens, and the schoolboys, and the Burmese Christians, would then be left without anyone to instruct them; and the poor, stupid Tavoyans would go on in the road to death, with no one to warn them of their danger. How then, oh, how can I go? My beloved husband wore out his life in this glorious cause, and that remembrance makes me more than ever attached to the work, and the people for whose salvation he labored till death."

Her decision was made, and when word came from America, inviting her to return to the homeland, she was able to decline with the clear

consciousness that she was in the place where God would have her be.

Although for three years previous to the death of her husband, Mrs. Boardman had been in poor health, she had carried her full share of the Mission work. She was a good linguist and had a fine command of Burmese. She had translated Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* into Burmese. She so loved the Burmese Bible that she once said to Mrs. Mason, "I should be willing to learn Burmese for the privilege of reading the Scriptures in that language." While she was not equally proficient in Karen, her knowledge of Burmese stood her in good stead as she prepared to take up her husband's work.

She gave herself first to the re-establishment and strengthening of the village and station schools. So effective was her work in these schools, and she showed such sound judgment in her correspondence with the Commissioner concerning her educational program and the principles upon which she was working, that later, when appropriations were made for the opening of schools throughout the Province, it was "with the understanding that they were to be carried on, on the plan of Mrs. Boardman's schools at Tavoy."

She continued the tours to the Karen villages in the jungles—and what a picture she made! Her dress was simple, but its dainty pink or white was most becoming, and her smile was always graciousness itself. She took George with her, and one of the Karens was always glad of the chance to carry the "little chieftain." What fun it was for the boy, as those strong, brown arms bore him past a group of chattering monkeys, or up a rocky mountain path! There were adventures on those trips, and Sarah had to have courage and a sense of humor to meet some of them. Writing to Mrs. Mason from a Karen village off in the jungle, she says: "Perhaps you had better send the chair, as it is convenient to be carried over the streams, when they are deep. You will laugh, when I tell you, that I have forded all the smaller ones." On several occasions during such tours she herself conducted the worship service of two or three hundred Karens, through the medium of Burmese and an interpreter; and so well did she accomplish the task that an officer of the English Church praised her highly.

She wrote one of her friends: "Every moment of my time is occupied, from sunrise till ten o'clock in the evening. The Karens are begin-

ning to come to us in companies; and with them, and our scholars in the town, and the care of my darling boy, you will scarce think that I have much leisure for letter-writing."

The Masons continued with her in Tavoy, applying themselves to the study of the language, and assisting her in the school work. As she could hardly have continued at the station alone, their presence and friendship were a great comfort and joy.

So for three years she continued her labors among the beloved Karens, who almost idolized her. Dr. Judson, as senior of the Burma missionaries, kept in touch with the progress of the work in Tavoy, and his admiration grew for the young widow who was so nobly and ably carrying such heavy responsibilities. The friendship between the two deepened, and in the course of time Adoniram Judson asked Sarah Boardman to become his wife. On April 10, 1834, they were married; and she went to live once more in Moulmein, which had undergone wonderful changes since she and George Boardman began the work there in 1827. In a letter written to a very intimate friend a year after her marriage to Dr. Judson, she says:

"I can truly say that the mission cause and missionary labor are increasingly dear to me, every month of my life. I am now united with one whose heavenly spirit and example is deeply calculated to make me more devoted to the cause than I ever have been before."

She and Adoniram Judson continued their work together in Moulmein and Rangoon, but she never enjoyed very robust health. Several times it was necessary for her to take short journeys along the coast in the hope of restoring her health. Finally, in the spring of 1845, it was decided that the only hope of her recovery lay in returning to America. As she was so very weak and so seriously ill, her husband and the three elder children accompanied her. On April 26, 1845, they embarked on the ship "Paragon" for London. Mrs. Judson improved in health, and for a while it seemed that she might be able to continue the voyage alone, allowing Dr. Judson to return to the work in Moulmein. But there was a relapse, and there seemed to be nothing to do but for Dr. Judson to accompany her all the way to America. Another turn for the worse occurred as the ship came to anchor at the island of St. Helena, place of Napoleon's exile. Here, on September 1, 1845, Sarah Boardman Judson breathed her last.

A woman of keen mind, remarkable linguistic gifts, real administrative ability, and outstanding achievements as an educator, yet withal modest, reserved and self-effacing, she had given herself devotedly to the people of Burma since in 1827, she first set foot on Burma's soil. She, too, had richly merited the "Well done . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Some years earlier Ko Tha Byu had finished his course. Toward the end of his life he was afflicted with rheumatism and blindness, and was no longer able to make the long tours in which he had formerly delighted; but he continued to teach and preach in successive villages where he made his home. Early in 1840, when missionary E. L. Abbott went to Sandoway, he took the old man with him; and for a time Ko Tha Byu lived and preached, now in Sandoway and now in another near-by village. During the rainy season that year, however, his lungs became affected. He knew that his end was near. He sent word to Mr. Abbott that he wanted to come to Sandoway and die near him. As the old man was very feeble, Mr. Abbott had him brought to Sandoway by boat, and himself lovingly tended him during the last days. Though he

suffered severely, he had no anxiety about the future; but would say to Mr. Abbott, "Teacher, God will preserve me." On the ninth of September, 1840, Ko Tha Byu died. His baptism in 1828 had marked the beginning of missionary work among the Karens. In the twelve succeeding years the work so heroically begun by George Dana Boardman and so nobly carried on by Sarah Boardman, Ko Tha Byu, and their missionary associates, had borne rich fruit. "No mound marks the grave of Ko Tha Byu . . . . but the eternal mountains are his monument, and the Christian villages that clothe their sides are his epitaph."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mason, *Ko Thah-Byu, the Karen Apostle*, p. 61.

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## THE KARENS TODAY

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## THE KARENS TODAY

The centennial of the baptism of Ko Tha Byu was celebrated at Tavoy, Burma, in November, 1928. One Sunday afternoon there gathered around the little pond where a hundred years before George Dana Boardman had baptized him, nearly two thousand Baptists; representatives from America, Great Britain, India and from the ten principal races of Burma. At this time there were baptized in this same little pond ten Indians, six Karens, four Burmese, and three Chinese.

The Ko Tha Byu Centennial Celebration was continued in Rangoon, in the large Memorial Hall which the Karens had erected there with money they themselves raised. Here the Governor of Burma, Sir Charles Innes, was the principal speaker. In the course of his address he said:

"If I read the signs aright, the future is full of hope for you. I have no doubt that the guidance and supervision of your missionaries are still necessary. But Christianity among the Karens is no longer dependent

for its life and reality on inspiration from outside. It has taken root, and draws a great part of its sustenance from the Karens themselves. Karen churches are to a great extent self-supporting and self-governing. The work is carried on largely through the Karens themselves, and provided that for some time longer the necessary measure of guidance is given, you can look forward with confidence to a long period of years in which the advance of the Christian religion will acquire increasing momentum among the Karens. . . . .

"With (the Karens) education goes hand in hand with religion. Where there is a church, usually there is also a school, and some of the schools I have seen have surprised me by the excellence of their buildings and the thoroughness of their equipment. The more so because the Karens are not usually rich, and money has frequently been subscribed at considerable personal sacrifice. A community which is ready and willing to spend money on its schools need have no fears for the future, and I have no doubt that the Karens are destined to play an increasingly important part in the life of Burma. The success already attained is at once a tribute and inspiration to the American Baptist Karen Mission. I congratulate it on that success and on this anniversary, and I wish the Karen community all prosperity in the future."

In addition to the Karen work in such centers as Tavoy, Moulmein and Bassein, there is a strong, self-supporting, self-administered Karen work, with virile Christian Karen communities,

schools and churches, in Tharrawaddy, Rangoon, Toungoo, Shwegyin and Nyaunglebin. Three Karens are in Burma's Senate and twelve in the House of Representatives. There are 363 Karen schools, 949 Karen Baptist churches—926 of them self-supporting—and a Karen Baptist church membership of 74,600; which is by no means the full Karen Christian constituency.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Jonathan Wade reduced the Karen language to writing. Among the first books to be translated was the Bible; this was undertaken by Dr. Francis Mason, who had been associated with Boardman at Tavoy. An excellent version from the original languages was produced. In addition, a hymnal was prepared with over two hundred hymns, remarkably true to the idiom of the Karen language. Other books—arithmetic, geography, astronomy, geometry—were added in time; and gradually a Karen literature has been built up. It was from a Karen school that Judson College finally developed. Today in Judson College there are 105 Karen students, and Karen graduates hold important positions in government, professional and business life.

It is noteworthy that all the Karen schools are self-supporting. The great Sgaw Karen work

<sup>1</sup> Statistics from the 1939 Annual Report of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

at Tharrawaddy, Bassein and Rangoon is not only entirely self-supporting but also administered entirely by Karen. This is largely true, likewise, of the institutions of other Karen stations. And from the very first, the Karen Christians have had a missionary impulse which has led them, with the missionaries from abroad, to be one of the principal influences in opening up the work among the Chins, Kachins and other hill peoples of Burma. It is universally conceded that the development of Christianity among the Karen is in many respects the outstanding example of missionary achievement, among any race, anywhere in the world.

As the Karen community has come to have a place of prominence and importance in the life of Burma, there has been a corresponding growth in the national and racial consciousness of this people. There has been long-continued agitation for the recognition of Karen as a major language of Burma. In 1938 the Karen New Year, which comes at the turn of the moon in December, was for the first time made a legal holiday, and was widely celebrated. On this occasion a group of Karen leaders sent broadcast the following remarkable appeal to the Karen people:

## *The Karens Today*

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"This is an historic day. It is our first officially recognized National Day. It is a day of opportunity. We are emerging from isolation into the stream of national affairs. Our conviction is that our two million Karens have a significant part to play in Burma's destiny.

"We owe our existence as a people not to organization or any political arrangements, but to certain distinctive qualities that have been given us. Our traits include simplicity, a love of music, honesty, steadiness and a sense of God. We believe that we can best keep and develop these characteristics in free association with other peoples.

"We are at a crisis. For us the choice lies between seeking protection through isolation, or adventure through active participation in the life of Burma. United ourselves, we could help to make Burma a nation. We recognize that as leaders we must be fully committed to our country—free from fear, personal ambition, racial and religious prejudice.

"Today we recall our heritage, our ancient poets and prophets and our tradition of *Ywa* (God). We believe every individual, every home, every village has a place in the new advance. Progressive in thinking, constructive in planning, and courageous in living, we can share responsibility with other communities for the making of Burma a united people.

"Are we ready on this New Year's Day to put the best traditions of our people at the service of this whole country?

SAN C. PO, SHWE BA, HLA PE,  
SYDNEY LOO NEE, SAW PE THA."

Truly, the Karens have come a long way since the days when they were a despised subject race; and Christian missions have played the major part in this amazing transformation.

I stood, one of a great company, beside that little pond at the centennial celebrations in Tavoy, in November of 1928, and asked myself the question: How can one account for this? A hundred years ago a brilliant young scholar from America, George Dana Boardman, baptized in this little pond—with only his wife and three Karen visitors standing by as witnesses—an uncouth Karen, Ko Tha Byu. Today, a hundred years later, two thousand people gather from the four corners of the world in memory of that event. How can one account for it?

Then there came to me, with tremendous force, the conviction that no man or woman can do anything, anywhere in the whole wide world, in harmony with God's will and in obedience to his command, without starting immediately influences that band the world with light and with redemptive love.

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## CONCLUSION



## 11.

### CONCLUSION

George Dana Boardman was only thirty years old when he finished his course. Was it worth while? Looking today at the results of those few years he spent in Burma—over a hundred years ago—one can only answer, Yes; abundantly so.

It is eternally and everlasting true that "except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." Suppose Boardman had remained in America. He might have continued as a college instructor, and possibly, in time, become the president of his alma mater. Or he might instead have become the pastor of a great church. His days probably would have been lengthened. He would certainly have had the joy and companionship of his family and of his many friends here. He would undoubtedly have made a large place for himself in the America of that day, and might well have consoled himself that he was meeting real needs here. But ever in his heart would have been the consciousness that God had asked of him a greater service. No; to

George Boardman, as to his Master, the field was the world, and he himself was certainly one of "the good seed . . . the sons of the Kingdom."

How shall we measure life? By length of days, or by strength and contagion of character and continuing, outreaching influence? Boardman had a short life—thirty years; only a brief labor in Burma—four years; yet that "crowded hour of glorious life was worth an age without a name."

The memory of the sufferings of Adoniram Judson in the death prison at Aungbingle, and at Ava, will ever remain one of the greatest and most blessed heritages of the Christian church. Precious, too, is the legacy of this young missionary, carried on a stretcher over the rugged mountain paths that he might be present when Karen Christians were baptized in the mountain stream.

Ann Hasseltine Judson, buried under the hopia tree by the shore at Amherst; Sarah Boardman Judson, whose grave is on the rocky island of St. Helena; Adoniram Judson, who found his last resting place beneath the waves of the Indian Ocean; George Dana Boardman, sleeping in the little cemetery at Tavoy—they will continue to inspire and challenge Christen-

## *Conclusion*

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dom until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Our Lord and of his Christ.

The inscription on the modest gravestone in Tavoy truly sums up Boardman's life.

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY OF  
GEORGE D. BOARDMAN,

AMERICAN MISSIONARY TO BURMAH

BORN FEB. 8, 1801—DIED FEB. 11, 1831

HIS EPITAPH IS WRITTEN IN THE ADJOINING FORESTS.  
ASK IN THE CHRISTIAN VILLAGES OF YONDER MOUNTAINS  
—WHO TAUGHT YOU TO ABANDON THE WORSHIP OF  
DEMONS? WHO RAISED YOU FROM VICE TO  
MORALITY? WHO BROUGHT YOU YOUR  
BIBLES, YOUR SABBATHS, AND YOUR  
WORDS OF PRAYER?  
LET THE REPLY BE HIS EULOGY  
A CRUCE CORONA



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